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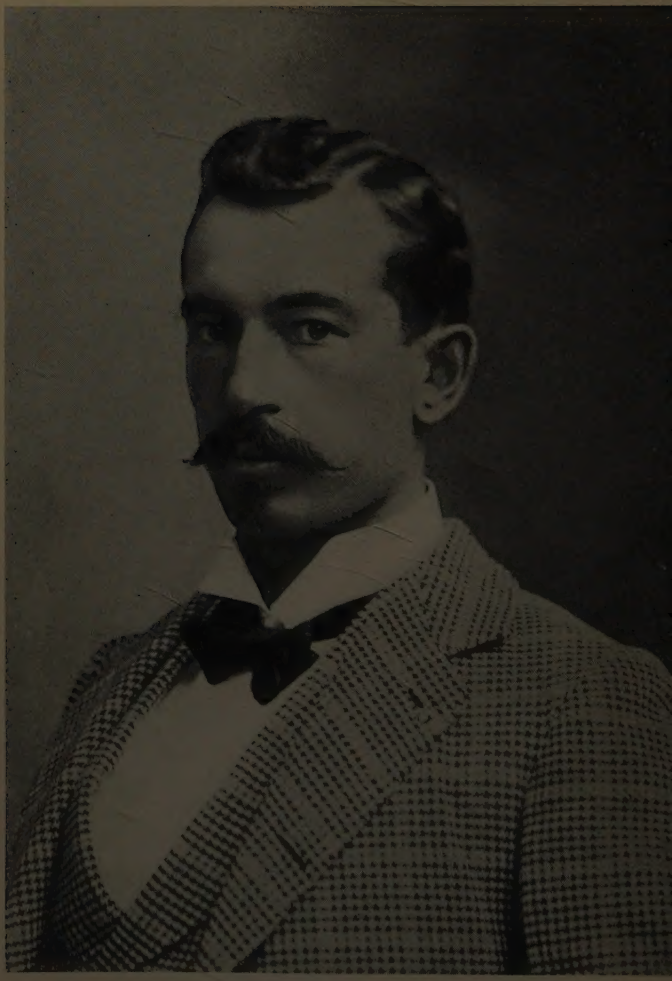

A CALIFORNIA RANCH SUPERINTENDENT
IN THE EARLY NINETIES

CALIFORNIA GRINGOS

by

H. A. VAN COENEN TORCHIANA
OF THE CALIFORNIA BAR

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PREFACE

WHEN is a cowman not a cowman?

There can be only one answer to so foolish a question: Never. For he who has once breathed the air laden with a sweet odor of blossoming sage-brush; who has seen the stars slowly vanish from the canopy of heaven while he stretched himself luxuriously in the blankets, just prior to greeting the dawn with a song—or a mouth-filling oath; or has felt the thrill of victory course wildly through his blood at the tightening of the riata, the bracing of the horse and the dull thud of the fleeing animal on the turf, can never forget that he was at one glorious time a centaur of the plains and the mountains.

It matters not whether in after and less colorful years, he becomes a banker or lawyer, a burglar or pickpocket, a beggar or prince, the call of the saddle will at times intrude on his most intimate thoughts and once more he will dream of the shouts of the roundup, of the smoke of the branding fires, of the songs around the campfires and the long nights standing guard around the milling cattle.

Now this book makes one distinct claim to uniqueness: It is a ranchman's story of cows and such, not written by a literary genius in Boston or New York, who never rode anything more fractious than an hilarious swivel-chair, nor by a dude-wrangler, but by one who earned cowboy wages by

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clinging on frosty mornings to the hurricane decks of broncos, endowed with various amounts of energy, whose hair has been stiff with the dust of the plains and whose face was burned by the sun and the alkali-laden winds, till the lips cracked and a smile hurt, and who telling these tales of hopes and disappointments, speaks from hard bought experience.

Riding the plains for several years, sharing hardships and pleasures with the other knights of the saddle, he finally emerged from the sage-brush with a strong love in his heart for the vast expanses, the distant horizons of the country of his adoption. Himself a gringo—a corruption of the uncomplimentary Spanish "griego," for by that name the earlier Spanish colonists, incensed at changing conditions, indicated all subsequent settlers, not belonging to the Latin races,—he learned to appreciate the hidalgos and their families, no less than the sturdy pioneers of Nordic stock.

The Author.

AUTHOR'S NOTE

IN writing of conditions which prevailed in the near past, writers have repeatedly found that it is almost impossible to escape the surmise that separate and distinct persons have been selected, after whom each of the dramatis personae in the narrative has been shaped.

The following pages are not in any sense of the word biographies of real persons. An effort is made to describe conditions; persons are only introduced to make these conditions live. The actors are unimportant on the stage of life; it is the conditions which count.

Therefore in the descriptions of each person, fiction is mixed with reality and the reality is part of a composite recollection of memories,—some of long ago,—of several persons, fused into one.

He who will look for a biography of some one known to him will therefore be disappointed, for there is none.

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CHAPTER I

The Immigrant Empire Builder

1.

MR. HERMAN CARPENTER, a sturdy pioneer, did not in the full strength of manhood enter the wilderness with a young wife on his arm and an axe on his shoulder. The semi-arid plains of the West needed a different kind of pioneers, men with far wider visions.

He was an immigrant empire builder in more than one respect, for not only did he hale from across the ocean, but so did most of the men who carried out his will.

First the junior partner of Carpenter & Singer, and after William Singer's death, the surviving partner, he became the President of Carpenter, Singer, Inc., the owner of extensive landed properties in the West.

A German-American citizen, of thick-throated speech, flat skull, stocky powerful build, at seventy years of age, his carriage was erect and he walked with an athletic stride. Self made, amassing a huge fortune in land and livestock, due to great ability and unflagging industry, he had found time to acquire only a few of the gentler graces, which so often adorn men in the evening of their lives.

His real name, before it was Anglicized, had long been forgotten by his earlier acquaintances, probably by the corporation president himself, for "family name" was of little importance to a man of his granite mold. Possessing a masterful mind, indicated by a high, broad forehead; an iron will revealed by keen, unwavering eyes, and endowed with a tremendous vitality, nature had bestowed on him a surplus of brain and brawn, leaving him unburdened with a ballast of too finely spun ethical feelings. Perhaps this was fortunate, for with such restriction he could hardly have left the everlasting imprint of his personality on the West.

Never a snob, he remained truly democratic in his ways of acting and thinking. No matter how many mounts he had in his stable he never became a beggar on horseback.

Some of his fawning acquaintances may have been embarrassed to hear him speak of his early butcher journeyman days, of his struggle as a poor immigrant boy when there were so many obstacles to overcome, especially when they felt that a more lofty origin could now properly be ascribed to the accumulated millions, but he scorned any such trashy pretensions, and when he was far advanced in years,—a multimillionaire—one of the largest land owners in the United States, monarch of all he surveyed, he rode at the head of the master and journeymen butchers parade through the streets of San Francisco, admired by his fellow craftsmen, admired by the rank and file of the people, and only ridiculed by those effete aristocrats who were re-

moved one generation from their fathers' and mothers' workbenches or washtubs.

Mr. Carpenter spoke German only on rare occasions. A rapid, lucid letter writer, he spoke and wrote in Spanish and English. He was by nature suspicious of all modern book learning. Magazines of the more weighty class he held in small favor; but the daily newspapers and especially the market reports enjoyed his attention. Not a student of general history or the lessons taught by it, he had the political and legal history of the State of his adoption at his finger tips, and his meaty, though often sarcastic, remarks were well worth listening to. The antics of politicians he reviewed with a sardonic mind.

He had only a bowing acquaintance with scientific farming methods or veterinary experiments, but when once the practicability of a new discovery had been demonstrated, he would adopt it with enthusiasm and apply it on a large scale. He was for instance the first to construct large dipping plants for his numerous herds of cattle, when this method of fighting the Texas tick promised success.

Accountants he considered at best necessary nuisances, and while knowing nothing of the higher rules of auditing, his mind was a human calculating machine, as many of his college-bred contemporaries had sorrowfully to acknowledge.

He had a decidedly sharp and witty tongue and pen. When one of his opponents, worsted in a deal, bitterly reminded him that he had known him in his

earlier days as a butcher boy, carrying a basket of sausages on his shoulder, he promptly retaliated:

"Sure, and if I had your brains I would have to still be carrying that basket."

Mr. Carpenter split his opponent's arguments with as great an ease as his infinitives.

Lack of early education did not prevent him from becoming one of the greatest organizers and operators of farms and cattle ranches the West ever produced,—the uncrowned cattle king, without a peer in California, Nevada and Oregon, and one of the shrewdest and most competent financiers that ever dwelt near the Golden Gate.

He had a genius for land law. The homestead, timber claim, mining claim, school land laws were all at his fingers' end; he handled landscript with consummate skill, and was better posted on riparian and other irrigation law than most lawyers.

Testifying in his own behalf on the witness stand, he was a joy to his lawyer on direct examination; when being cross examined, he would slip through the meshes of the law of evidence with an astounding facility. It was easier to hold a buttered snake by the tail than to pin the old cattleman to a positive answer, if it was not in his interest to give one. Opposing counsel stormed at him and demanded that he be punished for contempt of court, for failing to give a categorical answer; it was of no avail.

It is still told in the western courts, when the older lawyers have time for reminiscences and relaxation, that he testified that he "rode in a boat all

over the land," thereby making good his claim to certain admirable grass lands under the swamp and overflow act. Only too late was it ascertained that indeed he had, but that the boat had been placed on a wagon and pulled over the dry soil by four of his sturdy mules.

2.

It was fortunate for Herman Carpenter and William Singer that they became associated. Both had spent all of their active business lives in the West and knew it thoroughly. Each was a totally different type, filling out the requirements of the other. Carpenter was aggressive, and combative whenever the interests of the firm were served by such a course. Singer was invariably genial and urbane. In the division of the business the outside work fell naturally on the powerful shoulders of the younger Herman, while the administration and city work received the attention of the older man.

In the fifties, sixties and seventies, large tracts of land, so-called grants, were owned by the Spanish-Mexican families, whose viewpoint clashed with that of the industrious representatives of the newer and more virile civilization which had invaded the lost Mexican provinces. The old Spanish hidalgos, whose ideas of finance were notoriously fanciful and impractical, were bound to be pressed to the wall, and over the wall into the poorhouses. Some of these old Mexican land grants contained twenty, thirty or forty thousand acres of the finest kind of river land, offering rich picking to a stronger race.

Mr. Carpenter took the field to conquer these broad acres and found a western principality.

Mr. Singer made friends with the bankers and other moneyed interests, saw that all obligations were promptly met, by assuming newer ones if necessary, and gave his energetic associate carte blanche to draw on the office for any amount at any time when he could strike a good bargain. If one of the hidalgos got into trouble with a Hebrew storekeeper or small money lender, Carpenter appeared on the scene, offering, with a gruff but friendly word, a loan, for which the firm charged the then prevailing heavy rate of interest. The Mexican or Spaniard, fond of spectacular display, seldom repaid the loan, for his way of doing business was generally lax and prodigal.

Carpenter & Singer advanced a good round sum, at one percent a month or more, compounded monthly, and took a chattel mortgage on the stock. Time of payment came; nothing had been paid, for today was never the day of payment, but always "tomorrow" (mañana)—the smiling courteous hidalgo, asking for an additional loan, received it, also on the livestock as security. After six months a demand for payment was made; again it was not met. The chattel mortgage was foreclosed and the property was denuded of the livestock, thereby destroying its income-bearing quality, for lands had little rental value in those days. This land was then leased by the firm at its own figure, and a stiff advance on the rental was made to cover outstanding store bills, etc. Soon a mortgage was taken on the

property, but no demands were made for a few years. Then the request for payment was presented, could not be met, and the family lost its all. Such tragedies took place all over the West. It was inevitable, it was fate, and finally culminated in the well-nigh total elimination of that proud but inefficient race as an important factor in the development of the West.

3.

When the partnership was formed, both Mr. Carpenter and Mr. Singer, through industry and frugality, had already accumulated a substantial amount of worldly goods. Both were wholesale butchers and cattle owners; each was deriving solid profits from his enterprise.

True, certain cattle diseases were rampant on the western ranges, for the control of such diseases was still in its infancy. If a ranchman saw the first sign of black leg, anthrax or Texas fever amongst his fat cattle, he heard the knell of financial doom and became anxious to dispose of them; thus many a carload of cattle was shipped to the slaughterhouses, which today would bring serious difficulties to the shippers.

It was no different if hogs were threatened by cholera. The hog raiser saw ruin staring him in the face, when he detected the first sign of the dreaded disease amongst the animals in his feeding pens. To sell them at a sacrifice to wholesale butchers, not overly squeamish, and to do so quickly, was the only escape from impending financial disaster. A

banker might listen with sympathy to his story, still he demanded payment. To dispose of the threatened animals to a neighbor was out of the question, as he would call in the law or wreak personal vengeance. Meat inspection was still a new experiment. Federal inspection concerned itself only with meats entering interstate or foreign trade, while State and City inspectors were good-natured and inclined to be lenient. It was not so much a question of neglect of duty; it was more the easy, happy-go-lucky way of doing business in the new country. Many of them were lulled into the belief that what no one knew could hurt no one, and in fact, astonishingly little harm did result.

Carpenter, Singer, Inc., raised most of its requirements on its own ranches, and prospered greatly. Mr. Singer remained at headquarters. He knew personally every retail butcher who did business with the firm, and had a positive genius in gauging the amount of credit each was entitled to, accepting a short term paper, which bore a higher rate of interest than the firm had to pay at the bank for its discount accommodations. He knew also when to blend kindness with business and at appropriate times could be very lenient with a debtor, greatly endearing himself to many of them.

The bank balances of the firm would have increased very rapidly, were it not that Mr. Carpenter, when on the road, drew them down with amazing rapidity, often putting Mr. Singer at his wit's end to find means to pay the drafts which came pouring in on him. Fortunately he was a different tempera-

ment than his aggressive partner, for Mr. Singer was genial, while his partner was stern, was apt to smile when his partner would have sworn loudly and fluently, and thus was often able to obtain important accommodations.

As the landed properties increased in extent and their fat livestock under the firm's own brand began to appear almost exclusively at its shipping points and slaughter houses, the profits increased at an ever-growing tempo.

The holdings covered extensive grazing and agricultural lands in three of the western States. Many fairy tales floated about as to the extent of the property. In reality the company owned about one million acres. Few people who have not lived in the West can form a conception of what such large land holdings in California meant or what they looked like.

There was no native labor; values and consequently taxes, were very much higher in California than in other parts of the world and intensive cultivation had to go hand in hand with cattle raising to make the latter a success.

Land in California is notoriously "spotted." Some may be cheap at $500. an acre, while half a mile away, it would be dear at $25. or even $5. per acre. The expensive land would give a handsome return on the investment, the owner of the cheaper land would have a great deal of trouble in meeting his expenses and paying his taxes.

The title of a large holding could seldom be acquired by one conveyance. True, the Spanish grants offered here and there an exception, but most of the land had originally belonged to the United States or to the State of California. It had been acquired by individuals through the Homestead Act, the Lumber Claims Act, the Swamp and Overflow Act, School Warrants, by railroad grants and what not.

To operate successfully, it was necessary to eliminate the smaller owners,—legal title holders or squatters—and to consolidate in one body and under one main fence. This was imperative to facilitate the large farm operations, to bring down costs by mass production (at a time when prices of grain were very low), and to enable the cattle to graze over extended, unobstructed fields.

The squatters, often called in early western parlance "modocs," were thorns in the side of the cattle companies. Some of these men were decent enough, but many were of a quite different stripe and their elimination was a matter of grave concern.

Great energy and acumen had been necessary to acquire the vast properties which stood in the name of the corporation, free of all indebtedness.

There was always the question of water, so vitally important in the semi-arid West. No matter how rich land may be, its real value depends on a steady flow of irrigation water and floods. There is little natural sub-irrigation. One of the first in the State to recognize the overwhelming importance of irri-

ALL SET FOR A HARD DAY'S WORK

RANCH OVERSEER VISITING TOWN IN SAN JOAQUIN VALLEY IN THE LATE EIGHTIES

WHITE HORSE TEAM AND SUPPLY WAGON BRINGING GRUB TO THE DIFFERENT CAMPS

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gation, Mr. Carpenter had acquired large tracts of land, riparian to the San Joaquin River, and wherever feasible supplemented the riparian right by appropriating water under the customary and statutory laws of the State.

Looking still further into the future, he had promoted a canal and irrigation company. A small fraction of the water, diverted by this company, was sold to independent farmers. Carpenter & Singer, Inc., held in its treasury most of the stock of the company and thus controlled it absolutely. By this move, they acquired the favorable position of a public utility corporation, and consequently the right of condemnation.

The domain of the corporation was traversed by one of the most important rivers in the State,—the San Joaquin, and checkered off by numerous creeks and sloughs. It consisted of lands of all variety,—river bed lands, overflow grass lands, deep loamy, farming lands, salt grass lands and, of course, larger stretches of poorer lands, heavily impregnated with alkali, which, under the direction of Mr. Carpenter, were reclaimed by swamping and draining.

The latter process was unprofitable for individual owners, but the canal and irrigation company controlled a large amount of surplus water, which at stated times was discharged from its gates into the creeks cutting through the corporation's possessions and by a system of dams, recaptured, spread over the land and eventually allowed to flow off in the distant river, having accomplished its leaching purposes.

Mr. Carpenter showed himself a genius in organizing this great, complicated, widely flung industrial-agricultural plant. He never carried even a pocket memorandum, but depended entirely on his marvelous memory, knew to the exact number his many herds of cattle, even when the numbers had grown to thousands and tens of thousands. He had all the details of his business at his finger's end. He built up a rural administrative machine which was entirely personal, having acquired his vast knowledge of matters agricultural gradually as the properties grew; and his great success being based on practical experience and close observation, he scorned to employ in the higher ranks of his mighty organization men qualified by educational training. He promoted exclusively from those men who had started to work for him as cowboys, teamsters and laborers. He seldom made a mistake in his selection and commanded the loyalty of his men, who were entirely dependent on him.

In judging such conditions no one should apply a present-day gauge to former years. In the early development of the West, most great enterprises were domineered by the genius of one, or at the best, of a few men, who had to be ruthless autocrats. The new ideas of public utility control, participation of workers in profits, if not in the capital of a corporation, let alone in its management, were still unborn. Mr. Carpenter was emphatically a corporation head of the old school.

HARVESTER IN THE YEAR 1884, WITH "OLD HOUSER" COMBINE NEAR STOCKTON, CALIFORNIA. THIS IS THE OLDEST COMBINE, OF WHICH THERE IS ANY PHOTOGRAPHIC RECORD.

This system had its marked advantages as well as its fatal weaknesses. The whole organization became a personal machine, inspired and dominated by the mind of one man. Mr. Carpenter assumed that because he himself had started his business career, ignorant of accounting, bookkeeping or other school-acquired knowledge and had made a huge success, that every other man could do likewise, though on a smaller scale, if he only had the good-will to serve his employer well and the ambition to better himself. He forgot that while the new-born eagle may be able to learn to soar over the crests of the Alps without instruction from his elders, many a barnyard rooster, imagining that he can do the same, comes to disaster and disgrace; he forgot that at some time the management would grow to such an extent that independent thinkers would be indispensable.

5.

The president kept constantly in touch with his division managers, even in the smallest details. While each of the latter had a private room in every one of the subordinate farmhouses, Mr. Carpenter had a private apartment at each of the division headquarters, where he made himself thoroughly at home and saw that his presence was felt. It was not easy for him to show geniality to his men. When for days at a time, from early in the morning until late at night in their company, he discussed business, or otherwise remained silent; only in rare instances would he unbend. It could not be said

that he held civility in contempt; he was so direct in everything he did and thought that the more amiable ways of leading men to do his bidding never occurred to him. In his suggestions and criticisms he was emphatic, his words of approval or praise were far apart. He had become a great builder of physical properties, but lacked the ability of becoming a builder of men.

And how the men worked for him and saw to it that the men under them did likewise! The idea of eight hours being a working day never entered their minds. From sunrise to dark were the hours for the common help, which meant in the summer time from five o'clock in the morning until seven o'clock at night, and for those more skilled, many hours after dark,—and no question as to overtime. In this Mr. Carpenter gave a vigorous example, for he never spared himself.

6.

As the business grew Mr. Singer retained able counsel to steer them through many difficulties. The lawyers suggested that it behooved the partners to devise ways and means to provide for the continuation of the complicated and involved business in case of the death of one of them, as otherwise chaos and heavy losses might ensue. Mr. Carpenter did not at first favor the suggestion, for he intended to live until he was at least ninety years old,—and he did. Still he was willing to concede that his associate might not be able to nurse so long the thread of life, so the advice prevailed and the partners

GRAIN HARVESTING IN CALIFORNIA, IN THE NINETIES OF LAST CENTURY. THE MOTIVE POWER OF EACH HARVESTER IS PROVIDED BY 33 DRAFT ANIMALS.

entered into a mutual contract, confirmed by suitable clauses in their respective last wills and testaments, by which the surviving partner was granted a period of five years in which to wind up the firm's business. This wise provision proved profitable for Mr. Carpenter and his heirs, but not quite so satisfactory to the heirs of Mr. Singer, for it was the latter who took leave first.

Mr. Singer left a widow and a stepson and some collateral heirs, some residing in Germany and some in this country. Except for his immediate family, they were all in very modest circumstances, and the benefits to accrue to them, through the testamentary benefactions of their kinsman, promised to be a godsend.

After Mr. Singer's death, Mr. Carpenter plunged with renewed and energetic vigor into the general management of the far-flung properties, and began "winding up" the affairs of the firm by continually making new and more extensive improvements. Canals and bridges were built, ditch systems extended, large tracts of land brought under irrigation, roads projected and town sites laid out. His division superintendents were burdened with new work in addition to their multifarious routine duties. The surviving partner, having full power to manage the partnership affairs, deemed it advisable, according to his mature and deliberate judgment, to conserve by continuous improvement the assets entrusted to his care, and there was no one to say him nay.

The huge developments, staged and carried to a successful end, greatly advanced the State and increased the assessment valuations. It was also a very wise policy for the interests represented by himself, for the intrinsic value of the holdings continually increased; but it was not so acceptable to the Singer heirs, for they were only remotely interested in the increasing book values of the firm's property and not at all in the improvement of the State at large. What they wanted was dividends to live on. The present was of greater importance to them than the remote future. Many of them were already advanced in years. But few dividends were forthcoming, for almost all of the money was absorbed in the "preservation of the assets." Mr. Carpenter and his relatives labored under no such pecuniary disadvantages. He received a large salary for his services, and very appropriately so, for his services were really great; most of his relatives were likewise on the payroll for substantial amounts. Incompetent relatives, however, were not given sinecures. He did not brook any slackers around him. Few of the Singer heirs filled any of the worth-while positions in the organization.

During these five years they were generally able to obtain loans from Mr. Carpenter, even if they could get no payments from him as surviving partner. Ill-disposed persons claimed that Mr. Carpenter showed a financial genius, flavoring of Machiavelli in these transactions, that he was really loaning to the heirs their own money at compound interest, but what was nearer the truth was that he

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CATTLEMEN EARMARKING RANCH STOCK IN CORRALS

was constitutionally impatient and scornful with others less shrewd than himself. At the end of the the interim, several of the beneficiaries considered it best to sell out to him, and the larger ones were very glad to consent to the formation of a corporation into which all the interests were merged. They of course received a minority stockholding interest.

As soon as this corporation was well launched with Mr. Carpenter as president, improvements were started on an even larger scale. To the majority stockholders, having substantial places on the pay roll, this was not objectionable, but the holders of the minority blocks of stock were at a decided disadvantage.

With each improvement made, with each acre of land wrested from the dry plains and brought under irrigation and cultivation, the intrinsic value of the stock increased, but as one cannot pay dividends with bridges, town sites or water towers, the cash for such purpose was not available and the market value of the stock dropped at about the same rate as the intrinsic value rose. Those who had the cash were in a position to buy increasingly valuable stocks at constantly decreasing prices. Wall Street can sometimes take lessons in the far West.

Mr. Carpenter was not primarily actuated by pecuniary motives, for the human mind does not work as simply as all that. He considered himself, and rightly so, the principal builder and creator of that huge property, property which was partly wrenched from rebellious nature. His great mind

encompassed plans continually growing more stupendous, and to a man of his mold, it was inevitable that the heirs, who had contributed no efforts toward the great desired end, were like barnacles on his fast-moving ship.

The organization for the actual operation of the property had in the meantime become more effective and centralized.

The property in the central part of the State was held in one body, containing about eight hundred thousand acres, half being within the lines of the Dos Pinos division, the balance divided into three other divisions. The new railroad had recently reached and traversed the property, and a small town, Dos Pinos, had grown up on the company's land, within one mile of the ranch headquarters. Here were situated the general merchandise store, the bank and the hotel, the grain warehouses, the lumber yard, the pumping and electric light station, recreation halls and what not, all company owned, and Mr. Carpenter, believing in concentrated autocratic authority in business, expected the division superintendent to preside over all these activities, in addition to directing the management of the different ranches under his jurisdiction.

The town of Dos Pinos was the president's pet project, and it received a great deal of his personal attention.

The aging superintendent in charge of that division, used to the more simple and direct ways of the past, felt the load of his modern responsibilities

bearing down on him, and it became apparent that the burden was too large for him. Mr. Carpenter had to admit reluctantly that though he himself did not feel old as the years passed, his men did not seem to enjoy this privilege and he decided that before long a change would have to be effected.

CHAPTER II
Eucalyptus Camp

1.

WHEN the president of Carpenter & Singer, Inc., was three score years and ten, some of his associates urged him to break his rule f promoting men from the ranks and employ some nen of a different type and training. He gave in, hough with no great hope that the innovation vould prove a success.

When after thirty years of faithful service, the ld manager of the Dos Pinos headquarters re-igned, Mr. Carpenter's eye fell on Hendrik Van Doorne, a young man, employed on an adjoining, maller estate. He had not the slightest intention f placing him in a responsible position at once, but vished to try him out thoroughly, both as to back-one and ability in handling men. The homily,—ever mind what a man knows, it is what he does hat counts,—was always uppermost in his mind.

The president hinted that at some time, he might e promoted to a more substantial position, without aking any definite promise, however, and Van oorne was first assigned to a place amongst the ders at headquarters. After a month an unex-ected order came to take charge of a floating rapers' camp, located on unimproved, barren

fields, which had to be leveled, ditched and generally prepared for irrigation, and it was as tough a one as ever appeared on the California plains. Besides a surveyor, box and bridge carpenters, wheelwrights, blacksmiths, harness makers, a timekeeper, a few strawbosses, stablemen, cooks and rodmen, who formed the staff and steady crew, a force of more than three hundred men,—horse teamsters, mule skinners, shovelmen—floaters of all nationalities and different degrees of toughness and lawlessness, was encamped there.

An experienced, well-meaning foreman gave Van Doorne the cheering information that "only a guy with two right fists can manage that camp, and then only if he's got a monkey wrench in one hand and brass knuckles in the other," and added:

"Whatever you do, keep a stiff upper lip, for you'll be sixty miles from the peace officer, and if you run once, they'll run you off all the time." Then with a grin:—"Good luck and lots of it, but take some arnica and bandages along!"

Van Doorne smiled, but he was soon to realize what good advice he had received.

Next morning just before sunrise, he approached the new place of his labors, reined in his horse and gazed at the scene before him.

On each side the plains stretched toward the horizon in unending monotony. The sky line was unbroken by any groves of trees or monuments of Man. Hog wallows or slight elevations broke the surface at regular intervals, and in the shallow

AH JIM, 95 YEARS OLD, CHINESE RANCH COOK

little gullies between these low hummocks scrubby greasewood and bastard alkali sage brush reared their stunted, bitten-off heads discouragedly. Dried cow dung was scattered everywhere, for in the spring these now so arid-looking plains were carpeted with flowering grasses.

Eucalyptus Camp, better known as Gum Camp, was squat, unpainted, ugly, depressing. It derived its name from a small grove of blue gums, which had been planted the previous year as six-inch seedlings and were now three feet high. Within a dozen years they would form a landmark on the plains, indicating to the tired traveler where a prosperous farm, or perhaps a budding town site was located. Many a proud metropolis had such a humble beginning.

Gum Camp was a typical western construction camp. Making the desert bloom like a rose may sound poetical, but in reality it was a grim business, done in a grim way by grim men.

The camp had a larger cookhouse, larger barns, larger bunk houses, larger watering troughs and feed racks than most camps that the new foreman had seen, and the men likewise had a tougher name than usually prevailed, even amongst the hard-boiled crews who labored mightily on the sun-baked plains of California.

The young foreman smiled grimly. He knew that in the shanty cookhouse to his left, the usual chief-Chinese cook would preside. This one proved to be a giant of a man, looking more like a Canton-

ese pirate than a culinary chef, who ruled with an iron hand, not only his assistants, but all those whom he fed. Very loyal to his employers and their foremen, accepting their word as law, he brooked no interference from anyone else, and if one of the teamsters or laborers who ate in the bunk house doubted for a moment who was the Captain of that ship, he needed only to start something, and a six-foot fury, with a long pigtail flying behind and a meat cleaver in hand, would convince him at top speed. The only authority he recognized was personified in Ah Jim, his predecessor, who had remained at Gum Camp to instruct and entertain newcomers with the sagacity of his remarks and the repeated story of his past accomplishments.

2.

In the early nineties of the past century internal combustion engines were unheard of. Motive power for all farm operations, with the exception of a few newly imported English steam plows and some stationary and traction engines, had to be furnished by the muscles of mules and horses. Six hundred of these animals were concentrated at Gum Camp, all housed in the long, narrow barns, built opposite the cook shanty.

Van Doorne "deduced" with the help of former experience—and his deduction proved correct,—that the barns would be presided over by an Irishman. This particular head stableman wore red chin whiskers and a twinkle in his blue eye, with a ready

smile, but just as ready fists, which came into action with great rapidity.

Though the barns had stable room for all the live-stock, it was evident that the bunk houses would accommodate only part of the men. Sanitary conditions were of the most primitive character.

The sun rose—a ball of fire in the cloudless skies. Soon it beat down mercilessly on sweating men and beasts, and gradually the temperature rose to 110° in the shade—with no shade anywhere.

He could already hear the shouting of the men as they took their teams out to work; they were hitching up—two mules to a sled-scraper, four mules to a fresno-scraper, eight horses to the heavy, breaking plow, twenty horses to an excavator, and then the real work started.

The soil offered a rebellious resistance, never having been broken up before; dirt rose in clouds. Now and then a single-tree snapped under the strain of an animal, or a lap ring would suddenly lengthen out or part in the middle, and the men would curse.

At noon a whistle blew and every one of the animals, on its own volition, suddenly stopped straining and pulling, to trumpet its delight in a mighty chorus to the skies, refusing to move until unhooked and taken to the feeding racks.

3.

The first two months passed in routine. Van Doorne had been careful to defer to the judgment of the older hands, which was appreciated by the

strawbosses, who were middle-aged, experienced men and who became kindly disposed toward the newcomer. As he showed respect for their experience, many a hard-headed bit of advice was given and gladly received.

During the day everything appeared peaceful, on the surface at least. Quarrels of the previous evening, though not forgotten, were submerged in the rush of the work. It was at night that primitive passions broke lose and nature was seen in the raw.

The mechanics, strawbosses and other steady men kept by themselves, indulging in story telling or a friendly game of cards, before turning in early. They looked with contempt on what they called the floating skum, the skum of the earth they indeed were in many cases. Around the camp fires, in the bunk houses, in the stables, ugly and brutal fights broke out amongst them, sometimes for the most trivial reasons.

The young foreman kept himself aloof from these troubles, realizing that the strawbosses were far more competent to handle the continual brawls than he. All his energy was directed toward making the means at hand more effective; slacks were taken up, efforts were reorganized, methods simplified, labor co-ordinated, duplication eliminated, and before long the results were apparent.

Every Saturday night the surveyor brought in his written report, showing the number of acres which had been prepared the previous week for irrigation, and the timekeeper's reports showed the exact

RANCH WAREHOUSE AND YARD

amount which had been expended for labor. The originals of these reports were sent to the ranch headquarters and from there forwarded to the office in San Francisco, to be scrutinized by the ever-vigilant eyes of the president, who noticed with approbation that the cost per acre cleared steadily diminished, and made a mental note of the fact.

4.

Known to almost every camp is a trouble breeder, who taxes the patience of the men in charge, who always shirks his duties, always has an alibi ready and when finally brought to task will fight like a vicious rat. Generally he is of powerful build, has a cunning mind, will impose on his mates, demand, under all kinds of pretexts, that they do part of his work, swaggers and blusters of what he is going to do to the boss, and when he finds the slightest weakness in the moral or physical courage of the latter, will actually carry out his boasts. "Running the boss off the job" is his final glory.

It was during the first week of the third month that Gum Camp's trouble maker began to show his hand. A big nigger buck, in charge of the water-barrel, which was moved about on a mule-drawn sled, kept up a whispered conversation with each man who stopped his team to get a drink. Generally they burst out laughing at some remark the negro made, and then looked at the foreman, who seated on his horse, was watching the work.

Van Doorne noticed that the jokes were passed from teamster to teamster; that soon the shovel men

and the excavators were in the secret, and that most of them were grinning.

The waterbuck had just returned with a supposedly fresh barrel of water, and when Van Doorne approached, the huge negro, pretending to slap at his mule to kill a pestering fly, hit the animal in such a way that it suddenly turned in the harness, overthrew the sled, and hurled the empty barrel with a bang against the foreman's horse. The half-broken animal snorted with fright and reared in the air. All the teamsters stopped work "to take in the fun." But Van Doorne, who sensed that the ever-ready razor of the darky would soon be in evidence, had detached the heavy riding quirt from the pommel of his saddle, and when the horse landed on all fours again, he pressed the spurs deep into his flanks, and with one bound was near the man. Before the latter could take the grin from his face or produce his razor, the loaded whip came crashing on his skull, putting him down and out.

As the foreman turned in his saddle, to order the men to go on with their work, he was startled to hear the deep voice of the president, who had just driven up in a light buggy, hitched behind a spanking team:

"That is a fine sight for me to come on. Here I arrive with one of my directors from San Francisco to see how the work is going on, and to show him how well everything is regulated in this camp, and I find the foreman beating up a poor, innocent man."

Happily for Van Doorne, the director agreed with this view, saying that it was a shameful sight, and that such a brute should not remain in charge. With lightning-like perversity, Mr. Carpenter changed front. Turning suddenly and savagely on the surprised director, he ground his teeth and growled:

"Mr. Billings, if a man did not have guts or foresight enough to knock out that damned nigger, he could not work for me! Van Doorne, you go to the Dos Pinos headquarters. I'll put you in charge of that division tomorrow," and then with a sardonic grin,—"but don't ever let this happen again. You can see for yourself that one of the directors does not approve of such methods at all." The director was of the minority group.

And without furthed ado, Mr. Carpenter turned his team about and drove away as rapidly as he had arrived.

CHAPTER III
The Road to Headquarters

1.

THAT evening, his last one at the scraper camp, hope sang high in the young man's breast.

When he had ridden in at the head of his crew, men and animals alike covered with the fine dust of the dry, disturbed plains, which would soon blossom under the promised irrigation, he had found the new foreman awaiting him. The man, a veteran in the company's employ, had been ordered by Mr. Carpenter to report at once and assume charge.

It did not take long to make the transfer of authority, to give the necessary explanations and directions, to pack his few belongings and be ready for an early start next morning to division headquarters.

Rolled in his blankets, he had difficulty in falling asleep. Other evenings, exhausted by the long day's work in the open, he would drop off almost before he knew he was in his bunk, but now he was too excited for so simple a solution of his daily troubles.

He was to go tomorrow . . . . yes, tomorrow, to manage the Dos Pinos Division, the banner division of the whole concern. How grateful he was to Mr. Carpenter, who had given him that opportunity, and

how by faithful services and effort he would show his gratitude.

He felt as elated as a non-commissioned officer, suddenly informed that he had been promoted to Colonel, to take charge of a regiment. He felt sure he could handle the situation.

Slowly, however, doubts reared their heads. Could he really make good? And how would the old seasoned lieutenants, captains and majors accept his promotion? Would they co-operate for his success?

However, he was young and strong. Soon hope and self-confidence were again in the ascendency. Everything took on a rosy hue once more. He would be living at headquarters, have a ranch office of his own, have an office in town, he would be freed from crueling physical labor, and best of all he would have a bath tub again and decent living conditions. He would enjoy good associations. The headquarters house, in reality a substantial, somewhat pretentious ranch home, with moderate accommodations, picturesquely situated in a small grove of orange and olive trees and shaded by a larger grove of tall Eucalypti, now took on the proportions of a great mansion.

. . . . but suppose he made good, what was the future to be? Forty years a division superintendent and then retirement on his savings? There was no question of advancement here above superintendent, that he knew, or even a pension at the end of long and difficult years. Thoughts of men becoming old

WHERE FORMERLY A HUGE CAMP OF MEN, HORSES, FRESNO AND SLUSH SCRAPERS, BREAKING PLOWS, WERE REQUIRED, NOW ONLY A FEW MEN WITH MODERN MACHINERY BUILD A ROAD IN RECORD TIME.

in the harness and breaking down physically and mentally under the strain, kept intruding in his mind.

Besides, notwithstanding long days in the saddle, the rough life and still rougher associations, he had adapted himself to the surroundings of Eucalyptus Camp and had come to feel a sincere friendship and liking for many of the rough, uncouth men. He knew intuitively that he could trust most of them and that they trusted him. How would this be in his new surroundings?

He dozed off for a while until something disturbed him, and rolling over, he gazed through the open door and watched the moonlit plains, stretching before his physical eyes.

Reminiscences crowded in and he reviewed the eventful five years since he had arrived in America; the picture of New York arose before him and he grinned at the prodigiousness of his early gullibility.

2.

The first distressing circumstance had occurred when he landed in the United States, a green, conceited, European youngster. One of the first men he met was a bland gentleman in a long Prince Albert coat, a black shoestring tie, and a large, soft hat, all surrounded by urbane manners. When his new-found friend confidentially informed him in well-bred whispers that he had a potent influence with the Custom House powers, the nature of which he was in honor bound not to disclose, he was

greatly impressed, especially upon receiving the assurance:

"For a very small consideration,—not worth mentioning, suh, I shall see you through."

He had retained him on the spot and was very proud to shake the hand of this distinguished gentleman and warrior, for had he not been a Colonel in the Confederate Army . . . . "thank God, not with the Yanks, suh!"

Unsuspecting, Van Doorne had paid him his fee in advance for doubtful services to be rendered. After all the formalities of entry had been complied with, household goods cleared,—which would have been cleared as a matter of course, being covered by the proper consular certificate,—he felt that confidence demanded confidence, and imparted to the courtly gentleman the glad tidings that he intended to go West. The Colonel was immediately sympathetic, though deploring the fact that the star of Van Doorne's destiny was to shine in the West instead of the South, and he delivered himself of the following bit of wisdom:

"Well, suh, that is a great country, out West. I am sure that a young gentleman of your attainments and qualifications (and this with a courtly bow, which convinced his hearer that the honorarium which he had kindly consented to accept, had been far too meagre), is bound to meet with distinguished success, still I am told that life on the other side of the Rockies is not all beer and skittles."

Not all beer and skittles! What did he mean, anyhow? Van Doorne had heard of the proverbial lands flowing with milk and honey, but did the Colonel think that he wanted to start a brewery or a bowling alley? Later he fell upon knowledge, but more to his sorrow than to his liking.

Dear old Colonel, his memory is held in kindly thought. Circumstances beyond his control made him what he was, a courteous, gentle, wise and almost harmless old faker, who made newcomers his particular specialty.

3.

And then Van Doorne had gone West, to that country of broad acres, sunshine and wide horizons, where a man is a man and a stranger invariably a sucker.

He had endeavored to start an orange grove in the sunny climes of the glorious State of California. The plan was not a bad one. California is a glorious State, grows glorious oranges, has glorious sunshine, but difficulty arose from the fact that he was enrolled in the glorious "Order of the Independent and Amalgamated Greenhorns of the West." An enterprising real estate concern had provided him with an anything but glorious parcel of land, the top soil of which was a rebellious adobe, the substrata a burglar-proof hardpan. Having sold the realty as first-class fruit land, the company now wanted to prove its contentions and counselled blasting holes with dynamite and gunpowder in order to plant fruit trees.

An old Chinaman, a former quartz miner in the California gold hills, with an ill-smelling and evil-looking crew, went to work with a will and soon the land was covered by romantic-looking little geysers, spouting dirt and rock in every direction. What the gentleman from far Cathay did to his fast diminishing bank account, made him long remembered with mingled awe and admiration. What thoughts had passed through his Oriental mind while contemplating his handiwork will forever remain a secret, but with the native honesty of the Chinese trader, he considered Van Doorne was entitled to some quid pro quo in exchange for the tribute which he was levying, and advice being the cheapest commodity available, he had favored his erstwhile "bossie" with the threatening but unintelligent information that he has "up against it."

The pronouncement had been delivered with such a mixture of Far Eastern urbanity and virile western conviction that it made Van Doorne feel rather uneasy, and when Webster's Abridged Dictionary failed to unravel the mystic words, he hitched up the spavined old Dobbin, which a neighboring, grasshopper-eaten rancher had sold him, and sallied forth through the blazing heat of a June day to interview the old philosopher of Main Street in that particular County Seat. Merced, forty years ago, was generally referred to in Chamber of Commerce literature, as the "Bustling Metropolis of the San Joaquin Valley." Its Front Street, Canal Street, Main Street, etc., all began somewhere in the prairie and ended nowhere, becoming discouraged and giving

up the struggle as it were. The architecture of the different "emporiums of commerce," not to speak of the many establishments where liquid refreshments were served in large schooners, was the typical "Main Street" variety of those days.

If architecture is,—as the Greeks claimed,—frozen music, then these early builders must have been of a jazzy turn of mind. But can anything be really ugly, when into its construction has gone the sweat of strong men, the tears and prayers of good women? If the aspect of the town was ragged, if the inhabitants lacked that polish of manners and those graces of the mind which the education and leisure of older civilization seem to foster, there was nothing wrong with the hearts and the courage of these people. Brought from all parts of the United States, from Europe and the Orient, these rugged Westerners were neither delicate nor artistic, but they were real men and true women.

4.

One of the most attractive amongst them was "old man Goldman," a diminutive Jew of Bavarian extraction, with a face like browned old parchment, nervous manners, great energy and an extremely shrewd intellect,—with a heart like a child. Entering his general merchandise store, you would find agricultural implements, dry goods, groceries, Triple H liniment, "good for man and beast, internally or externally," and almost anything else that rancher, farmer or townsman might need. He was always on hand, in his rusty suit, bent over his

books of account in the small cathedra-like structure erected in the center of the main floor, or otherwise he would be talking to a farmer or rancher, excitedly berating him, perhaps, for being so much behind in his account, demanding to know if he too were in the general conspiracy to get him in wrong with the wholesalers in Frisco and land him and his family in the County Poor House. But the old man always wound up by saying in a gruff voice, ridiculously disproportionate to his small body:

"All right, get what you want, but for God's sake pay up soon—and tell Barney to give you a bag of candy for the kids!"

This particular morning Mr. Goldman was in a genial frame of mind. A rancher had just paid a large bill, several years overdue, and he had presented the man with a pair of suspenders of delicate pink hue, on which green flowers of a mysterious species blossomed freely. The rancher's wife, also presented with a flamboyant "Mother Hubbard" of latest fashion, beamed in complete happiness. It was then that Van Doorne submitted the so momentous question:

"Mr. Goldman, what do they mean in this country when they say 'you are up against it?' I cannot find it in the dictionary."

A shrewd twinkle came into the eyes of the Wise Old Man of Main Street. Smiling most benignly and rubbing his small brown hands, he explained:

"Up against it, up against it, now, sonny, you will never understand it until you feel it!"

Dear, old, lovable friend, wise as an owl and gentle as a lamb, long after blindness dimmed that twinkle in his eyes, Van Doorne could recall him sitting in front of his store, sunning himself, and visualizing the beauties of struggling, straggly Main Street—his own Main Street, which he so dearly loved. He is dead now these many years; his voice can no longer deliver scoldings or solid chunks of western wisdom, but the Recording Angel cannot have failed to note all of his acts of kindness and gentleness and to have seen that the soul of him who had done so much good on earth might rest in peace.

Within two years Van Doorne learned and felt what it meant to be "up against it," but while he lost in that ill-conceived venture his patrimony, in fact his material all, he came out from the ordeal with zeal unquenched and hopes unabated.

He learned that indeed everything was not all "beer and skittles." The trees, planted with infinite care, under the best advice obtainable, and at no mean expense, did not thrive. A plague of locusts appeared from the West and though legions were poisoned by placing dabs of arsenic and bran mash on the fences, still serious damage was done.

Other insects showed determined animosity. The red spider and the yellow mite made inroads on the newly planted orchard. The bank account ran desperately low as the struggle against failure continued.

The young owner communicated his plight to the Grand Old Man of Western Agriculture, who in the

nineties and well into the twentieth century presided over the destinies of the College of Agriculture of the State University. Dean Hilgard received the young man very kindly and many an hour did the inexperienced orchardist sit at the feet of his wise counselor, drinking in his advice. The Dean brought him in contact with his associate professors, Wickson and Jaffa, and they encouraged him to study horticulture and entomology. This advice was no sooner given than it was acted upon with enthusiasm. The cost of a good microscope and necessary books offered difficulties, but the opportunity to act as team driver for busy neighbors at odd times also offered a solution, and as a result much midnight oil was burned as he pored over heavy tomes.

Before long he became sufficiently proficient to be appointed the first horticultural commissioner of Merced County, and soon thereafter he received his commission as State Quarantine Guardian for his district. His titles were impressive but ironical, for the trees which had for five years been the recipients of his ardent personal care did not thrive. The soil remained rebellious and no amount of theoretical science could change the hard, shallow adobe, underlayed with a thick stratum of hardpan, into even medium good orchard land.

Came a day when further payments on the land became due and no money was available to meet the demand. As he stepped out, just before sunrise, preparatory to begin a long, grinding day's work complicated by worry, he noticed a peculiar,

sour odor in the spring air,—it might have come from a far-off vinegar factory. It was obviously the end . . . . sour sap must have struck the peach orchard. In a panic he ran through the orange grove toward the other field. His worst fears were true. All the young leaves which but yesterday were glistening in the sun, were now wilting and shriveling. Each tree carried a wreath of death on its tender branches.

There were no illusions left. He was up against it and he felt it. For hours he tramped back and forth in the orchard, now dejected, now in a rage, praying and cursing until he was mentally and physically exhausted.

Finally he straightened his shoulders and stalked into the house. Within two weeks he had gratefully accepted employment on a neighboring estate and when the opportunity offered itself he moved to the west side of the valley,—the "wild" side as the east-siders termed it, and had entered the employ of Carpenter & Singer, the largest cattle company of the West . . . . in a very humble capacity.

6.

The first morning as he rode out with the other cowmen, he was the target of many a good-natured joke and jibe. His "European seat" on his horse evoked the smiles of his companions, the rhythmical way he rose in the saddle while trotting, aroused their mirth, and when the restless bronco, indignant at being mounted by so unusual a rider, finally threw him, he was promptly dubbed the flying

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Dutchman, or Dutchie for short. Only Antonio Lopez, the gentleman major domo, did not laugh, but looked very thoughtful. Wise in his generation he did not lose his grave attitude and in the evening by the camp fire, he gently advised the scoffers to stop their raillery, ending in his mixed Mexican and English:

"Muchachos, watch that hombre hollanda, he may be pronto our dueno."

And now another prophecy in homely vernacular had come true . . . . Dear Signor Lopez . . . . and then he fell asleep.

7.

Next morning when Hendrik Van Doorne took charge of the Dos Pinos division, he vowed that he would give faithful services.

In the five years that he served under the president, the mutual understanding was generally cordial and even friendlier than the latter allowed relations between him and his division managers to grow.

Many factors made this possible. The younger man, grateful for having been given the opportunity to advance, had been raised in a country where respect to older people, their opinions and viewpoints was a matter of course. He admired the great practical knowledge of the president, his far-seeing, almost prophetic outlook on the business interests of the State, and his wonderful penetrating mind, his rugged simplicity and his unbounded energy. Here

was genius indeed, and it was a rare privilege for a young man, still in his twenties, to come in close contact with such a mind—a contact which sometimes lasted for days at a time and then from early morning until late at night.

In the beginning he had some difficulty in freeing his mind from prejudices, for he had been taught from early youth that education, considerate manners and a just outlook on life were far greater assets than the mere possession of wealth or power. It was not easy to adjust himself to some of his chief's viewpoints. He soon ascertained that in big business, as it was conducted these many years ago, points of ethics were often ruthlessly sacrified to the practical exigencies of the case. At a time when young men were advised "be honest if you can, but make money" and when it was solemnly declared "the dollar is your best friend," rough and ready methods were bound to be employed in a struggle to get results.

Later the inevitable clash of opinions occurred, but the younger pioneer always gratefully remembered the hours that he was allowed to sit at the feet of this truly great, industrial master and builder of the West, drinking in the wisdom of the old Sage of the Plains.

SALOON AND MEAT MARKET IN LATE EIGHTIES IN A CALIFORNIA RANCH TOWN

CHAPTER IV

The Dance

1.

VAN DOORNE had been in Mr. Carpenter's employ for several years, when one hot June night in the year 1898, a dance was in full swing in the garden of the leading hotel of Oldman, a small town, surrounded on three sides by the lands of the Dos Pinos division. The master of ceremonies stood on a chair in the middle of the dancing platform, calling out the figures of a waltz quadrille. Square dances were very popular in those days and everybody was enjoying them. The musicians, a cellist, a violinist and a flute player, occasionally reinforced by a husky citizen belaboring an ancient piano, did their best, and good innocent fun prevailed. The garden was filled with visiting ranchmen, dairymen and farmers of the neighborhood, accompanied by their portly better halves and more slender daughters, by the storekeepers and other leading citizens of the river village, and by a number of unattached cowboys, cowgirls and schoolmarms.

The ranch and cowmen were mostly native citizens, the dairymen generally of Danish descent, the farmers hailed from a dozen different countries,

while the merchants were German or Jews of different origins.

In one corner of the large platform, the unattached free-lances were having a party by themselves and had elevated on a small rickety table a booted, spurred and chaparraroed person, who interpreted in his own fashion the commands given by the master of ceremonies. When the latter called out "grand right and left," this understudy bellowed, "hit the floor now with your leathers"; and the gracious "ladies in the center," was interpreted with "bunch the heifers in the middle." The gentleman who performed these feats was slightly "lit," and wrote the scenario as he went along, to the great delight of his hearers. There was no danger that his good-natured ribaldry would deteriorate into vulgarity, for these cowmen, drunk or sober, always had a wonderful respect for decent women and never failed to show it.

The dancing number had come to an end. Hot, manly brows were wiped with gaudy silk handkerchiefs, while the ladies flocked together, using the thoughtfully provided palm leaf fans. A Beau Brummel of the countryside appeared with a great tin bucket containing iced lemonade; another followed with an even greater bucket of ice water. A tin kitchen dipper and several tin cups hung by their curved handles over the sides of the buckets. Cups passed from hand to hand, from mouth to mouth and were industriously filled and as enthusiastically emptied. It was all very democratic, very good-natured, everyone enjoying the cool drinks and no

one giving thought to the hygienic principles involved.

The hilarious assistant master of ceremonies eyed the lemonade and ice water with hostility. He passed the word that "he would put them up" at the bar. This proved popular, and most of the swains, endeavoring to look innocent, drifted past the array of matrons and maidens, now demurely seated on benches all around the platform, towards the swinging doors for more manly refreshments. The fair ones, by no means deceived, indulged in many a sly dig.

After reaching the bar, George Jeffries, the weather-bitten, hard-boiled and generous American cowboy, proved true to his word. Noticing a few of his followers lingering near the door, not knowing if the invitation was really meant for all, he solved their perplexities by dancing an approved cowboy jig and singing in a somewhat cracked voice:

"Come on, now, boys,
And drink the swill
Which was prepared
By cowboy Bill!"

Their scruples vanished.

2.

Just then trouble stalked in. A trainload of cattle had been loaded that evening to be taken out of the County, for the animals were starving on the range. An Arizona cowman, who flattered

himself on being a "bad hombre," was in charge of the train, and he, too, had looked deeply into the cup that cheers.

While Mr. Jeffries' guests were lining up beside him and the redoubtable George was busily engaged in stabilizing his person against the bar and his senses within his person, the wild man from Arizona entered. Lurching towards the mahogany, he ostentatiously pulled a twenty dollar gold piece from his pocket and planking it on the bar with a bang, announced:

"I'm the toughest beast that stalks around on two legs tonight in Oldman, and I yearn to meet up with a beast that thinks he is as tough as I am. Let's all have a drink."

Now the invitation was eminently proper, but the introduction was highly objectionable, besides, he was interfering with some one else's game. As the gentlemen had cast off their belts and their firearms on account of the heat, and the wild man from Arizona looked every inch a "two-gun man," discretion was considered the better part of valor by all of them, except by the original host. With some difficulty he steadied himself on his rolling legs and then emited the classic phrase, "well, here I be," and with an astounding swiftness, whipped out an extra gun which he always "toted" under his left arm, and sent a bullet through the crown of the bully's hat, missing his head, as he intended, only by a fraction of an inch, the speeding shot burning the intruder's scalp. To the surprise and delight of all the spectators, he followed this up by giving the

SUNDAY IN TOWN, AFTER A HARD WEEK'S WORK ON THE RANGE—1891

stranger a tremendous long range kick, and then making for him, used his gun as a club. The son of Arizona stood for a second petrified, but only for a second; then he bolted for the door and disappeared into the darkness.

The German barkeeper got out his pocket knife and began to dig the bullet from the window casing, casually remarking over his shoulder:

"Vell, gentlemens, the twenty dollars is still up alreaty. Shall it be four bottles of fizz, Mr. Jeffries?"

Mr. Jeffries nodded and then said with a wink:

"Alright, Pop, put 'em up, but sling a good shot of old Bourbon in mine . . . . on the house, mind you."

George's health was toasted again and again, but being averse to any popular admiration, he solved his difficulties by slumping into a convenient chair and falling asleep.

When the younger men, refreshed and somewhat hilarious, returned to the dancing platform, navigating slightly, souse by souse, they found the ladies still flocked together, exchanging confidences of a domestic nature, and the older men congregated in different groups in the garden, discussing the one and all absorbing topic—the dry year.

CHAPTER V
The Drought

1.

THE winter of 1898 had been the second dry year in California and great distress had spread amongst the cattlemen, especially amongst those whose land, situated above the flow of the irrigation canals, was dependent on the rainfall for the grain and hay crops. They were derisively known as "sky farmers" by their more fortunate brethren who owned irrigable lands.

Farming on the west side of the San Joaquin River, above the canals, had always been a gamble, more so than on the east side of the river or in most other parts of the State. It is true that a crop would mature under a most astonishingly light rainfall; even six or seven inches for the year, provided it was properly distributed, would insure a fairly good crop. From eight to ten inches would mean a very good harvest, and more than ten inches a bonanza. But the bonanza years were far apart, not occurring more than once in seven or eight years. Accepting a cycle of eight years as a reasonable measure, one would record one bonanza, one good crop, two fair crops, two poor crops and two total failures.

The land itself was of great fertility, mostly loose, sandy loam, washed down by rains and storm creeks from the foothills of the Coast Range. The farther south one went, the richer and looser the land became, the easier to work it and the greater the crop. The farther north one traveled the heavier the land, deeper plowing and cultivation were required and the better the rainfall, therefore the less the gamble and the greater the reasonable assurance of a return on the work and the investment. The farther south one went the poorer the farmer and the greater the gamble; the farther north one went the better the farmer and the more business-like the enterprise.

2.

Carpenter & Singer, Inc., held large tracts of land above as well as under the flow of the canal. On the outside lands, they maintained a great many so-called sky farming renters. Seldom did the corporation farm any of this land on its own account.

These renters had to be carried from year to year and the corporation performed the same services for the independent farmers, who were mostly independent in name only, for the lands as well as their farm implements, livestock and crops were covered by real estate, chattel and crop mortgages, running in favor of their mighty neighbor, or of the storekeepers in the small towns.

At Dos Pinos the corporation kept a large general merchandise store, where almost everything was sold that a farmer might need. The concern oper-

ated a large grain and produce warehouse, coal and wood yard and a bank, giving little excuse to those who dealt with it to go outside to obtain accommodations.

If land was owned by Carpenter & Singer, the lease entered into gave the corporation one-fourth of the crop as its share for rental, leaving three-fourths to be mortgaged for advances in seed grain, horse and mule feed, farm and household supplies, and the corporation paid the taxes. If the land was owned by the individual farmers, they paid the taxes and interest on the mortgage, while the crop was held as security for whatever advances the big neighbor might make. All stubble and straw were reserved for the cattle corporation.

In case of a total failure both tenants and free farmers were unable to pay anything, when the time of settlement came and had to go still more heavily into debt. If there was a partial failure, the debt increased at a slower tempo. If there were one or two good crops the debt remained stationary, the farmer being able to pay his year's expenses and possibly the accrued interest on the debt, and if there was a bonanza year, he could generally pay up all his back debts and his year's expenses, but that left him strapped again, except for his land, if he was a free farmer, and in either case his farm outfit, which by that time was pretty well worn out and needing replacement.

Some of these tenant farmers were lucky enough to strike a bonanza the first or second year, after beginning their operations; if they had sense enough

to quit then, they had several thousand dollars profit, but they seldom did. Speculation was in their blood and they invariably believed that good luck would continue.

Carpenter & Singer, Inc., charged good high prices in their stores and warehouses and high rates of interest, generally twelve percent on all bills after thirty days. Once in a while they lost a bill, for no matter how vigilant the managers were, some tenant would pull up stakes over night and disappear into a neighboring county. There he would sell his outfit before the corporation had time to have the chattel mortgage recorded in that jurisdiction, thereby losing its lien against a bona fide purchaser for value. Paradoxical as it may seem, the corporation made especially good profits on these farm transactions when there was a poor crop, for the rich, sandy loam, even under the encouragement of only two or three inches of rain, would produce a sack and a half to three sacks of grain to the acre. But such small yield at the prevailing cheap prices —wheat often sold as low as $1.00 a cental f.o.b. railroad car, and barley for much less—did not justify the harvesting of the crop, which remained uncut in the field.

Soon large bands of the corporation's cattle appeared, followed by equally large bands of hogs, whose owner derived a very substantial profit from fattening the animals, while the unfortunate tenant farmer failed to receive any remuneration whatever. The owner-farmers were glad to sell their uncut crops for the price of new seed.

MULES BECAME THE FAVORITE DRAFT ANIMALS FOR LARGE FARM WORK AND DEVELOPMENT WORK IN THE WEST, AS THEY WERE ABLE TO STAND LONGER AND MORE SUSTAINED EFFORTS THAN HORSES, ESPECIALLY ON DRY LAND. ON WET OR BOGGY LAND, HORSES WERE PREFERRED ON ACCOUNT OF THEIR LARGER FEET. THIS PICTURE SHOWS AN ALL MULE-POWER HARVESTER AT WORK ABOUT 1895.

3.

When it became apparent in the early spring that the State would be visited by a second dry year, Van Doorne placed men in the field to work systematically between the canal and the foothills, buying from the independent farmers either their scanty uncut grain or their fall-stubble.

In such difficult times, when cares beset him from all sides, when expenses mounted to unheard-of heights and whole herds of stock were threatened with starvation, Mr. Carpenter, now well past seventy-four years old, proved himself a true genius in handling the situation. He was here, there and everywhere, appeared at the most unexpected times, drove himself without mercy and demanded not only that his managers should do so themselves, but that they should exact like service from the highest to the lowest employee in their respective divisions.

He did today what others only thought of doing the day after tomorrow. The other stock owners awoke too late to the situation that all the fall feed had been corralled, not only in the farm country, but that Van Doorne had sent the energetic George Jeffries all along the river and up in the mountains, to buy all the feed as far as the Hetch Hetchy Valley. Mr. Jeffries had made an excellent, though somewhat alcoholic job of it, and had bought everything in sight. At first the mountain farmers had thought it well to wait the time when he became "mellow," but they soon ascertained that the more Mr. Jeffries imbibed, the closer he became in his transac-

tions, and that pleasure of the bottle did not interfere with his business—but only with theirs.

The other cattlemen began to offer fancy prices for stubble fields, but to no avail. While Van Doorne stood well with the tenant farmers, they naturally resented that the grain fields, not worth cutting for grain, but now having considerable value as stock feed, should go to their creditor without any compensation. They were able to obtain the necessary store credits to tide them over one more season, but a little cash would have been most welcome. Some bitterly longed to throw a match in their dry fields, but they knew the consequences which would swiftly follow on such a course. The cattlemen felt not less displeased than the farmers that the "octopus" had taken time by the forelock and forestalled them. But while resentful, most of them were also just and recognized that Van Doorne, driven by necessity, had done in time what they should have done themselves.

4.

"How are conditions on your range, Mr. Van Doorne?" asked one of the older ranchmen, that summer evening at the dance.

"Rotten," answered the manager; "but why the devil do you call me Mister Van Doorne—why don't you call be Henry or Bill or something human like that?"

The young man had often been lonesome for such friendly, homely words. He heard the others call

one another Jim, Dick or Dave, and it was always mister, mister, mister, with him. He did not only want to be with them, but of them. He had done everything to make them forget that he was reared in a strange land; he admired and loved these sturdy Westerners; he had worked with them in the saddle for days, he had chummed and bunked with them, and they had slept together in the open; yet some way or other, they always wound up by putting a handle to his name. Would he always be looked upon as an outsider?

The old cattleman who had spoken, grinned: "Alright, bully boy, keep your shirt on. Tell us how everything is inside your fences, and I won't mister you again."

Van Doorne glanced around the circle of thoughtful faces:

"Well," he said, "I have often thought that you and I and all of the stockmen in the West are engaged in a pretty tough business. This year I have seen thousands of head of cattle die in the fields of starvation, and if we have another dry year the calamity will be still greater. Individually we are all opposed to cruelty to animals. We would discharge a hired hand if he failed to water our work stock in the evening, not only because it's good business to look after our stock, but because we hate the man who neglects dumb brutes. Still, in dry years we allow poor helpless creatures to die of starvation. And why? Because it is not practical to feed them. Because it would mean a loss.

"In the cities there are societies for the prevention of cruelty to animals. What would the judge say to a teamster or drayman, haled before him on a charge of cruelty in allowing his stock to starve? Would he consider the claim that it was unprofitable to feed the animals just then? Certainly not, and the culprit would be sent to jail. Very likely the judge would denounce the man before pronouncing sentence.

"Now, aren't we equally guilty, and on a very much larger scale? From Port Costa cargoes of grain are loaded in schooners, barks and barkentines for Liverpool and Antwerp each day. Barley brought only eighteen dollars a ton f.o.b., which means less than sixteen dollars on the farm. We could have bought it for that. A great deal of the grain is shipped right from this section, having been grown on the irrigated lands. It is the same with alfalfa hay. Thousands of tons were shipped out of the State and did not bring more than ten dollars a ton in San Francisco, or eight dollars at the railroad shipping point. Three pounds of grain and five pounds of hay a head per day would have wintered these stocks very comfortably at an expense of about five cents per day, or a dollar and a half a head per month, plus the distribution charges, which would not have amounted to an additional fifty cents per head."

One of the farmers interrupted rather tartly: "All right, Mr. Van Doorne"—and then correcting himself, "all right, Henk, that is fine, but how about the practical side, that it does not pay to spend two

IN 1898 THE SO-CALLED STRAW DUMP WAS INVENTED. FORMERLY THE STRAW, LEFT IN SMALL PILES ON THE FIELD, WAS BURNED WITH THE STUBBLE. AFTER THE CATTLE INDUSTRY MADE CONTINUALLY LARGER DEMANDS FOR ROUGH MATERIAL TO BE MIXED WITH THE ALFALFA HAY, STRAW BECAME MORE VALUABLE AND IT WAS STACKED WITH THE ALFALFA HAY IN CONSECUTIVE LAYERS, AFTER HAVING BEEN MOISTENED DOWN WITH A SPRAY OF BRINE.

dollars a head, say six months of the year on stock cattle? That would be twelve dollars per year, and with other expenses, it would bring it to eighteen dollars a year, figuring the other six months, when there is bound to be a little pasturage, at a dollar per month. For what? To save an old cow, which once a year would drop a calf, worth only ten dollars when it got to be six months old? It would land us all in the poorhouse, and if anything has to starve, I'd rather it would be the cattle and not my family."

The other men grumbled assent, for they did not care to be lectured by a "durned youngster."

Colonel William Davidson, the much respected owner of a large neighboring ranch, took a different stand. His fine old face showed interest, and he raised his hand:

"One minute, neighbors, this young gentleman has given us a new viewpoint. While we may ultimately disagree with him, we shall never learn anything unless we are willing to listen to those who advance different ideas from our own. I suggest that we let the young people do the dancing for a while, and that we adjourn to the upstairs porch, where it is a little cooler, and continue this conversation."

Everyone in the gathering loved and admired the Kentuckian, and his proposal was accepted without argument. The porch was empty except for George Jeffries, who had transferred himself to this quieter spot and humped in a chair was peaceably slumbering.

"I see one of your trusted employees is enjoying a well-deserved siesta," remarked the Colonel, with a fine smile, for the news of the latest exploit of the cowman had already reached him.

Van Doorne nodded, and being requested to continue, said:

"Well, our neighbor here made the suggestion of the poorhouse; it is a grave question, still I do not believe it is as bad as all that. For every fall that I have been in this country I have seen thousands of acres of stubble burned over by the independent farmers, simply because it was easier to plow the land after all the dry vegetation was burned off, than to pasture it and plow under the remaining stubble and cattle dung. If the latter course had been followed, the land would have been enriched and you men could have relieved your natural range and alfalfa fields, allowing the root grasses to stool out on the former, and the seed grasses to drop their seeds again, growing on the latter a new crop of hay. Every year thousands of tons of straw and chaff, coming from the harvesters and tractors are burned, instead of being stacked, when it might have been mixed with alfalfa hay and sprayed down with brine. In good years you did not need the feed, so you thought, why go to the expense? In bad years, well, let the devil take the hindmost, the hindmost being the poor cattle entrusted to your care."

Several of the men shuffled their feet, but his first heckler was not to be beaten off so easily.

"Well, how about your range? Your outfit has consistently preserved all the hay and straw, are you any better off now?"

Van Doorne replied promptly:

"We certainly are, in the sense that we would be a whole lot worse off if we had not done so. But what I want to say now is that you folks are unjust in your resentment against Carpenter & Singer, because they bought up all the stubble and straw they could this year. They have done so every year, though perhaps not on such a large scale. Furthermore, you men had all the opportunity in the world to do the same. If Mr. Jeffries beat you folks to it, why kick against him, or me, or the corporation? Why not blame yourselves? Conditions with us are bad enough, for we are very much overstocked. The large acreage of alfalfa we put in is largely to blame. You cannot raise stock cattle profitably on alfalfa, so that is reserved for the stock being fattened for the market, but the more alfalfa we have the greater number of that kind of live-stock we need to use it up profitably, and the greater the number of stock cattle we must have on the range to draw from. Every time we put in more alfalfa, we withdraw just so many acres from the range, and we move in a vicious circle. The balance between our wild range and improved irrigated fields has been destroyed. We have been trying to restore this balance by renting large stretches of tule lands around Stockton, and meadows in the high Sierra Nevadas. Last year we managed to

maintain thousands of head outside of our fences, but in the fall of the year we had to bring them back. There was little to eat on our own range during last winter, and the plight of many of the brutes was pitiable. I have seen, as you probably have, too, the old cows give birth to their calves with the greatest struggle, and the coyotes attack and tear to pieces the calf before it had entirely left the sheltering body of the mother, who was too weak to defend her offspring. The poor mothers would stand in little hollows, against the sunny side of an embankment, endeavoring to obtain from the sun the strength and subsistence, which the soil denied them. A lot of our live stock are simply bags of skin and bones."

One of the ranchmen who had been listening broke in sharply:

"And how do you defend Mr. Carpenter, who could have shipped in feed for the miserable, starving cattle? His company has ample surplus and a stockholders' assessment would have been quite in order."

"I am working for Mr. Carpenter and not sitting in judgment over him," answered the young manager. "I either follow his policies and remain loyal to him, or I quit. I feel sure that the Colonel here will understand my position."

The old Colonel nodded kindly. "Of course we understand, Mr. Van Doorne. You are doing the best you can under the circumstances, but would you have any objections to telling us what you are doing to relieve the situation?"

"Not at all, Colonel. We have already sent thousands of heads to the high mountains. We send them off a thousand at a time in charge of a head vaquero and ten riders. A grub wagon and the dead wagon with two skinners go with each outfit. Unfortunately we meet with considerable opposition along the way, for the mountain men claim that amongst our stock are diseased ones with black leg and Texas fever, and occasionally anthrax. It is difficult to deny the charge, for the animals are so weak that they all look diseased, but we must get them to the high meadows or we will lose them all. It is wonderful how quickly they pick up once they are in the mountains and have good feed and water. But we do lose a great many en route. The last dead wagon brought back over a hundred and fifty hides. Right above Mariposa and around Mormon Bar we have to send armed guards along. The horses we send to the tules, and likewise large numbers of the young steers. We cannot send the mules because their small feet could not support them in the swampy land. As it is, we lose enough livestock by bogging down."

The conversation was brought to an end by the sound of hoof-beats on the hard road. For the trained stockmen's ears it was easy to ascertain that the horse had gone lame and was exhausted.

CHAPTER VI
A Night Ride

1.

A RIDER halted in front of the hotel, shouting: "Is Senor Douchy there?" It was too difficult for the softly-tuned Spanish tongue to pronounce the harsher, formalized title of Mr. Dutchie.

Van Doorne stepped outside and recognized Martinez Toralles, a member of the crew under Francisco Marentes, which had left for the Stockton swamps two or three days before with eight hundred horses.

"What is the trouble, Martinez?" queried the manager.

"Bridge broke down when we crossed Stockton slough at Paradise Cut, two men wounded and about seventy horses killed."

"The devil," said Van Doorne. "When did that happen?"

It had occurred at four o'clock that night. Marentez had sent him back with the news and was camping at the slough waiting for orders.

"And you rode those seventy miles in one stretch during the night? How often did you change horses?"

Toralles grinned foolishly and swayed in the saddle. He was given a drink of whiskey, which he gulped down eagerly. Then he was told to go to the livery stables, rub down his horse and turn in himself.

The vaquero turned his horse's head towards the stable and disappeared in the dark.

2.

Half an hour afterwards Van Doorne found George Jeffries, now thoroughly awake and alert to the situation, standing by the heads of a spanking team, hitched to a light spring wagon, which was to take the two men to the place of disaster. The redoubtable George made the cryptic remark:

"When you step in the wagon, boss, don't walk on Toralles, you may squeeze out some darned good liquor."

Van Doorne, realizing the fine loyalty of this simple Mexican, was pleased. He placed the man's head on his saddle, unfolded the saddle blanket and threw it over him. Then he and George got in gingerly and soon they left Oldman's twinkling lights behind them.

The manager was driving and his companion, having nothing to do, grew loquacious.

"Have you been to the Stockton swamps this year, Mr. Van Doorne?" he queried.

"No, George. I have had a lot of work in the division, and our responsibility ceases when we have delivered our stock at the last holding field before

IRRIGATION DAM IN THE SAN JOAQUIN RIVER—1908

Stockton. This year Mr. Carpenter has put an independent superintendent in charge of the tule division. Even if I were not so busy with my own troubles, I would not trespass on the other fellow's preserve."

George was irrepressible. The after effects of the liquor were evident in his desire to express his opinion freely.

"Well, governor, with due respect to the position that gentleman holds, a little trespassing would do him no end of good. I suppose the corporation knows what it is doing, but he is some hombre! He says the job gives him malaria, and that the only way to fight it is to take plenty of whiskey." George spoke admiringly. "He even got me soused the other day, while he stayed sober. I would have appreciated him more for that, if next morning he hadn't tried to give me a stiff lecture on the evils of getting drunk on duty. What do you think of that?"

Van Doorne smiled. "Never mind the gentleman's sins of omission or commission, George. Cut out the personalities, but tell me how they are managing when they land our stock on the islands?"

Mr. Jeffries took the rebuke good-naturedly, for even while he spoke, he wondered vaguely whether he was not going too far in criticizing one manager to another, so he was relieved to plunge at once into the details.

"Well, they've built flat-bottomed scows with fences around the bulwarks. Floating corrals, I guess you'd call 'em. They each hold about two

hundred head. Several of them are lashed together and then a steam launch tows them through the sloughs and other waterways to the landing places. They carry with them some sort of a movable bridge which is easy to put together. They use them when there is no landing place."

"And how is the stock doing?"

"Pretty good, sir. You know the critters don't get much out of that tough old salt grass. In the beginning they are pretty bad, but they soon get over it. Afterwards they know the different grasses and they are careful of what they eat. It's all young, strong stock we've got there and you can see an improvement within a few weeks. After a couple of weeks, they commence to lick their dry hides again and that's a mighty good sign. The greatest trouble is in the bogging down, soon after the landing."

"Tell me something about that, George."

"Well, sir, last year when you was there you had the pick of the best lands, and the very swampy, unstable land was not used. This year so many other cattlemen in the State were dried out that all the lands had to be used. Everything that was green looked good to the feed hunters Mr. Carpenter sent in there. I guess they had to take whatever they could get.

"Some of them lands is very treacherous, and the cattle coming off the landing are not yet swampwise; they don't know how to dodge the bad places. Because they are the wettest places, the grass looks

awful green and good to them, so they make for them and then one or two go down. The herders do all they can, a couple of riders watch on each island, but of course they have to stay on the hard land with their horses. If they are in time, they rope the sinking animal around the horns and often manage to pull him out. After that happens the others that stand nearby get swamp-wise mighty quick. But the men cannot be all over at once and sometimes one of their charges is bogged down too deep before they can reach him. Then nothing can save him. He just sinks. The more he struggles, the faster he goes down. When the slime gets up above his flanks, he realizes what's happening and he bellows with fright, and fights for his life. Then he lifts his head above the ooze and looks at you. My God, it gets my goat when I think of the way they look at you with nothing except horns, ears, eyes and nose above the slime. We shoot them then."

And Mr. Jeffries, who a few hours before had come within an inch of drilling a hole through the objectionable skull of a fellow gentleman from Arizona, surreptitiously wiped away a tear.

3.

After driving about forty miles they neared the dark main street of a straggling village. The horses began to show the strain of the long trip and Van Doorne was glad that he had telephoned ahead to the local livery stable to have a fresh team ready.

As they drew up, the doors promptly swung open and the night hostler called out:

"All right, gents, your team is ready. We will switch the horses around in a jiffy."

Both men jumped out and unhitched the steaming horses, which George took inside, while the hostler brought out the fresh team. Within a few minutes the buckboard rolled off en route to Tracy. This time Mr. Jeffries held the ribbons, for his chief had remarked somewhat insinuatingly:

"I believe you had some sleep back there in Oldman, George. You drive now and I will take a nap."

And Mr. Jeffries was some driver. With consummate skill he guided the team at a spanking gait over the main country road. Without losing any time, he evaded most of the holes in the road by the light of a lantern which was attached to the rear axle and whose reflector threw the light well in advance of the team. Once in a while he steadied the swaying figure next to him with his left arm, and when unavoidable jolting threatened to disturb the sleeping man, he swore softly under his breath and took a better grip on the lines.

At Tracy a fresh team was obtained again and once more the men were off, this time the manager driving. About half an hour before the break of day, a man, swinging a lantern across the road, stopped them suddenly.

CHAPTER VII

The Bridge Across the Slough

1.

"WHAT is up?" called Van Doorne.

The man, a rustic humorist, answered: "Nothing's up, something's down."

"Well, what in hell is down?" queried Jeffries, who as usual became impatient with any equivocations.

"Oh, nothing in particular, only the whole center span of the long bridge over Stockton Slough near Paradise Cut. Some fool Mexican vaqueros are to blame for that. Those darned greasers don't know nothing nohow. Our old man,—he's supervisor of this district,—says he is going to make Carpenter & Singer pay good for this outrage. He put me here to warn teams not to try to cross. You gotta go through that gate to the left, pass through the field by following the trail, and pretty soon you'll come to a good ford. The slough there is wide, but the bottom is firm and there is an easy slope to the banks. If you cross there, you will find a white sand bank staring you in the face, right across the slope. You can't miss it, that is if you wait until dawn. On the other side, you's find a pretty good road turning sharp to the right along the bank of

the slough. That'll lead you back to the country road."

"Any other teams waiting there?" queried Van Doorne.

"Nope," said the lantern man. "You be the only ones that has passed here during the night. Here, I'll open the gate for you."

The team drove off in the direction indicated.

"Do you know that supervisor?" asked Van Doorne.

"Sure shot," came the reply. "An old guy. He must be about seventy-five; looks like Santa Claus —long white whiskers and everything. Good fancy handler of a job. He knew damned well that that bridge had been unsafe for the last couple of years."

"Same old game, I suppose," opined Van Doorne. "Would not wonder if he will try to justify the county's neglect by blaming us. That will square him with the voters. Besides, he will try to work out of us enough money to replace that middle span."

"No, he wouldn't do anything so mean," was the sarcastic comment of Mr. Jeffries. "The idea! Just one middle span with all Carpenter & Singer's millions! He don't care nothing about their fighting drought and starvation. He'll stick 'em up for a whole new bridge, you bet your boots, and a steel one at that, with nice concrete foundations, and he'll have modestly carved in stone at each approach —'Erected under the supervision of the Honorable

William H. Logan, Supervisor of District No. 5, San Joaquin County, California,' "

Van Doorne laughed. "So that's it. Well, we shall have to interview that patriotic citizen very soon."

2.

They entered a heavy mist which was floating over the land, enveloping everything in a gray blanket. This fog is believed by the river and slough dwellers to be the cause of so much swamp fever. It rises early each morning during the summer time, about ten or twelve feet above the level of the lowlands, to float around heavily until dispersed by the rays of the rising sun.

Van Doorne picked his way gingerly and the horses, intelligent, prairie-bred cayuses, did their part. Suddenly there appeared above the mist, the head of a man, covered by a great white sombrero. It was as if the head were detached from everything else, and came slowly floating towards them, supported by the cloud of mist and vapor. As they drew nearer, the figure of a man on horseback was slightly outlined in the fog, and soon they recognized Francisco Marentez, the head vaquero, who was in charge of the ill-fated band of horses, which had met with disaster.

"Good morning, Francisco," hailed Van Doorne.

"Good morning, Mr. Douchy," replied the major domo. "Very glad you came. Just follow me and I will go ahead of you, fording the slough. Not

necessary to wait for more light. I know every foot of the ford by this time."

The horses splashed to their knees through the water. In normal years the slough would not have been fordable at this time, but the scant rainfall in the valleys and the even scanter snowfall in the mountains had lowered the water to an unusual level. Without mishap the crossing was accomplished; only a few minutes after the break of dawn they arrived at the place of disaster—two men very much alert and the third one still snoring on the bottom of the vehicle, never realizing how nearly he came to taking a morning bath in the slough.

The bed of the slough was filled from bank to bank with the whitish mist, covering with a merciful veil the ghastly details of the scene. Van Doorne gazed intently from the embankment down to the bottom of the sluggish stream thirty or forty feet below, but he could see nothing there. Only the structure of the destroyed bridge showed itself as a ghostly skeleton. He walked over the long approach, partly built on land, partly in shallow water, until he stood at the rim of the bridge, which only yesterday had spanned the center of the stream. A slight breeze sprang up, gently moving the misty haze backward and forward, like an undulating scarf. Then the slanting rays of the rising sun appeared above the trees, bordering the water's edge, and the fog gradually disappeared. The men stood rooted to the spot, hypnotized by the scene. Here and there dead horses could be discerned floating in the water, others were stranded against high sand

banks. Grass and tule-covered, little islands held the carcasses of several dead animals. Some of the poor brutes hung on the slivered uprights of the destroyed sections, empaled as if a giant hand had placed them there to die slowly in agony, while by their very weight and efforts to free themselves, their entrails were pushed out of their ripped open bodies. He looked at the head vaquero, who with misery in his eyes, stood next to his chief. Noticing the genuine distress of the man, Van Doorne said gently:

"Well, old man, it can't be helped. How did it all happen?"

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CHAPTER VIII

The Head Vaquero's Story

1.

"IT was about three o'clock yesterday afternoon when I saw the overhead structure of the middle span of the bridge loom up ahead. We were then about three miles away. I gave an order to halt the herd. The fences on each side of the road were in good condition, so there could be no trouble on that score. After the stock had quieted down, I rode ahead with Rojas towards the bridge. We always do that, you know."

He spoke slowly and with great precision. "Well, some way or other, it did not look good to me. We went over it on a trot and it shook quite a lot. To test it again, I went back alone on a gallop, and instructed Rojas to watch the structure. I could feel the bridge sway a little and Rojas told me that it swung almost six inches in the center. I rode back and found a farmer on the other side who was willing to rent a field to us to hold the stock overnight. I struck a bargain, paying him fifty dollars for the accommodation. He said the bridge was not in good condition; last year a thrashing outfit had made it sway almost a foot out of line, and he had warned the supervisor, but nothing had been done."

"Very well," said Van Doorne, "then when you knew that the bridge was not safe, what did you do next?"

"Well, señor, I ordered two of my men to cross first, open the gate of the rented field and stand across the road at that point to send the horses into the field. Then I posted three men at the bridge head so as to stop a sudden rush. I took one of the best riders with me and started to cut out fifty head at a time, passing them slowly over the bridge. It stood that fine, no trouble at all. The men in the rear drove the herd up quietly, and we made the trip twelve times, the men at the bridge keeping tally."

"Then," said Van Doorne, "you must have had six hundred head across, why did the bridge collapse after that?"

2.

"I am coming to that, señor. I had just cut out fifty more and was reaching the bridge with them when I heard a shrill steam whistle behind me, followed by a thundering of flying hoofs. The ground shook and all the rest of the herd came running in our direction. The three men on watch with Rojas and me tried to stop the stampede, but it was too late. The spearhead of a flying column of horse flesh struck us like a hurricane and we were carried with them on the bridge approach. A dozen horsemen couldn't have stopped those frightened animals. All we could do was to hold our own horses back as much as possible, let the hurricane pass by,

traveling slowly in the same direction. Only a few of the animals had managed to cross the large center span, when there was a great booming, crashing noise like thunder, and the whole span collapsed."

"Any of our boys hurt?"

"Yes, a couple, it was lucky none of them went down—one got over just before the collapse came, but the three others and myself got caught in the crush. Two of the men were pressed against the railings of the approach and had their legs bruised badly."

"I see. How many horses escaped?"

"A hundred and twenty-seven. Seventy-three were either killed outright or had to be shot. Some broke their necks or legs, others were drowned by the animals that fell on top of them, a lot were caught amongst the timbers. They squealed terribly."

Again the manager nodded. He knew only too well the fearsome cry of a horse in his death struggles.

"And those that were saved, did you round them up?"

"Yes, señor," answered Marentez, with some pride. "We caught every one of them. They are now with the rest in the field. We worked till late at night." His drawn features showed both grief and lack of sleep.

"Relieved the poor wounded cusses from their suffering?" the manager inquired.

"Yes, señor, we shot some of them with our six-shooters, but many were too far away for that. There is a rabbit and coyote hunter camped nearby. He is a dead shot and has a forty-four rifle. I hired him to finish the job."

"And," queried the ranchman, "who was the fool who blew the whistle behind the horses? Where can he be found?"

Marentez looked grimly at his inquisitor. "Answering your last question, señor, he can be found in the county hospital. Some way or other he was plumb foolish enough to get entangled with a riata of some one I know tolerably well. He will not blow a whistle again for some time to come. As to who he was, well, he was a guy who was the swamper on a hauling outfit and curried a traction engine, dragging a line of grain wagons over the road. He wanted the right of way and was in a hurry. One of the boys told him to wait about twenty minutes and we would have all the stock across, but he cursed and said that he would be darned if he waited for a bunch of common greasers. He said this was a public highway, and no one could block it on him. So he blew that damn steam whistle of his almost in the ears of the horses 'to scare them.' Well, he did scare them all right."

Again Van Doorne nodded. He knew the type and he remarked:

"We shall settle with that gentleman or his boss in due time. Where are the boys?"

"Two of them are standing guard in the rented field, the others are all having breakfast in the camp."

"Have you any idea where I can find the supervisor?"

"Yes, señor, he is at that road house, a few hundred feet beyond the bridge."

Van Doorne did some quick thinking, and then gave his conclusions:

"All right, boys, we must hump ourselves. Frank, do you know if we could keep that field a day longer by paying a bonus?"

"Yes, señor," Marentez answered. "I know we can. The farmer told me so yesterday. He says if we pay him another fifty dollars he will take down the fence around an old straw stack in the field and the animals can clean that up."

"Fine, do so, and tell the undertaker to bring his team and begin moving the dead animals to a convenient spot. He has, of course, his skinning knives and all the necessary ropes with him. Give the boys who are bruised a rest in camp, and let the others help to skin the animals. They can dry the hides during the day, it will be hot and twelve hours will lighten them considerably. Tonight they can be salted down and you ship them tomorrow by train to headquarters for the salting vats. As soon as the work is well started, you better go amongst the hog raisers in the neighborhood, telling them that they may come today and take the carcasses away to boil and feed to their hogs. I bet they will

clean that up pretty fast, but if there are any left this evening, build a fire of the driftwood and burn them up."

Marentez nodded, mounted his horse and rode to camp.

George Jeffries looked inquiringly at his chief: "And what is my little stunt, boss?"

"Your little stunt is to wake up Martinez, who is still snoring in the bottom of the wagon, and the three of us will start to collect some evidence for the lawyers."

CHAPTER IX
Daddy Logan

1.

IN a few minutes Martinez reported for duty, was directed to strip off all superfluous clothing, wade and swim out to the main span and break off some of the pieces of the rotten uprights. Lithe as a panther and an expert swimmer, he was soon at the designated spot. He had fetched a hand axe from a nearby camp and cut off big chunks of the rotten bridge timbers, which Jeffries promptly hauled up at the end of his riata. After sufficient debris had been collected and safely stored in the spring wagon, the three men drove over to the camp.

Van Doorne obtained some tags and twine used in tagging fresh hides and tied one to each piece of wood, marking the time and the particular place from which they were taken. Each tag was signed by him and Jeffries, while Toralles affixed his mark.

A few minutes later they drove up before the roadhouse and had their breakfast. Coming out of the dining room and into the bar room, they noticed an old man with fine features, a long white beard and dignified carriage, standing in the center of a group of farmers, evidently his neighbors. The old patriarch, who wore the familiar large, black hat with army cord around its crown and the button of a

civil war veteran in the lapel of his faded blue coat, was speaking.

"They will pay for this outrage, and pay dearly, my friends. It has come to a pretty pass in this glorious country of ours when lawless cattlemen from the south can come here and break down a perfectly good bridge, thereby placing much inconvenience on our citizens, not to speak of the heavy expenses on the county taxpayers, and if that rich corporation imagines that they can do such things, they fail to take into consideration that the interests of you, my friends, is entrusted to an old soldier, who years ago looked death in the face and never flinched. Before I. . . . "

Van Doorne quietly stepped up to the group of men, and addressing the orator who was just hitting a fine pace, said:

"This is Mr. Logan, I believe?"

The old veteran bowed with dignity. "Yes, sir, himself, William H. Logan. But my neighbors around here call me old Cap. Logan and I am proud of that title, sir, although I served as a sergeant in our great war."

"Delighted to meet you, Captain. I believe you are the supervisor of this district?"

Again the captain by courtesy acquiesced, adding:

"Yes, sir, I have held that honorable position for the last twenty-six years."

"Fine," smiled Van Doorne. "I am sure you deserve it. Would you kindly tell me who your bondsmen are?"

Old Cap. Logan at once looked suspicious.

"And who are you, sir?"

"Oh, my name is Van Doorne, at your service, Captain."

"And why do you want to know who the gentlemen are, who were good enough to go on my official bond?"

"Well, captain, I have a nice little bill for damages against you for the death of those horses, you know. And as I heard you speaking to your neighbors a few minutes ago, I am convinced that you are not in a frame of mind to pay voluntarily, so we will have to sue you, and of course join your bondsmen in the suit."

The old man's face flushed with anger. "So that is it, you are one of the hirelings of the octopus, which rides rough-shod over the rights of the people. You are . . . . " and a good deal more of that sort.

2.

Van Doorne had decidedly the unpopular side of the argument, in fact some of the audience were becoming openly hostile, and the muttered suggestion was made to throw him out and duck him with his dead horses in the slough. The manager stood his ground and said quietly:

"Gentlemen, a rough house would be very unprofitable to some of us. If you will kindly look behind you, you will see my friend, Mr. Jeffries, whom some of you know by reputation, sitting on that bar, cheerfully swinging his legs and sticking

his spurs in the perfectly good mahogany surface. In case of trouble Mr. Jeffries will surely feel that he must sustain his reputation as a dead shot, and that may prove unhealthy for some of us. Besides, if my honorable friend limbers up, I shall feel in honor bound to do my share. Then, my friends, you must also remember that camped a few hundred feet from here are ten of my riders, who have not been inside of a Sunday School for many years, and who are very sore just now. In fact some of those well-mounted gentlemen are rather known to be hard boiled, and in case there are fireworks here, they will be attracted like flies to a pie, and what those hombres will do to this place and everybody within riata or gunshot radius will be worth telling for many a year. You see that it is not fear that compels me to continue this conversation pleasantly. Now, gentlemen, that bridge was rotten and neither you nor the county lost anything. It had to be replaced anyhow, and moreover some of you might have lost your lives there, had you tried to cross it with heavy grain wagons, or a thrashing outfit."

"By gosh, he's right," spoke up one of the listeners.

"Of course I'm right," continued the speaker. "Now, gentlemen, we are skinning the animals right now. If any of you want some of the carcasses for hog meat, you better get busy." Then turning to the supervisor, he said:

"Captain, I am off for Stockton. It will be stated at the trial that you, as a public official, declined to

give the name of your bondsman to a citizen, who asked for it. Of course, I shall get the information at the courthouse quickly enough. Meanwhile, adios."

As Van Doorne was preparing to step into the spring wagon, which the highly pleased Mr. Jeffries was now holding ready for him, he heard a voice behind him:

"Young fellow, may I speak to you for a minute?"

It was old Cap. Logan, who had followed him outside. His whole appearance had changed. The man looked shrunk in his clothing and real distress spoke out of his eyes.

"Certainly, Captain," was the reply. "What may I do for you?"

"I shall make it short, sir," said the old warrior, with dignity. "I am seventy-five years old. The last two-years drought broke me. I am financially flat on my back, young man. My only son left and my old wife is dying slowly. You may notice her sitting at the window propped up with cushions, in the second house to the left when you drive to Stockton. The mortgage on our homestead is overdue and is held by Peter Silver, my main bondsman, the other is only a strawman on the bond. If you file that suit you will finish both me and the wife. We have nothing to live on except the seventy-five dollars a month I am getting as supervisor. If . . . . ," but his voice choked and he turned away, still dignified in his misery and his pride.

The younger man looked at him silently, and finally said:

"I understand, Dad Logan, leave it to me. No harm will befall you, if I can help it."

3.

When the old man came home for his midday meal, he found the wife much more cheerful than she had been for a long time, and very excited:

"Pa, what do you think? The most wonderful thing happened this morning. You will be so happy when you hear it. Two cowmen drove up in a buckboard. One of them got out and came right plumb into this room. He said that they had met our boy, who was doing right well; he had told them how sick I was and had given them fifty dollars to hand to his old mother, just as a present. Jim could not get away himself just now, he was so busy, but he was going to send some money regular; he was sorry he could not write, but he had a sore thumb. When I asked him how that happened he said he guessed Jim had hurt his hand when a horse fell through an old bridge. I wanted them to stay a spell, but he said they was in an awful hurry, and he ran off and jumped into his wagon. When they passed the window again, they both bowed and waved their big sombreros at me, just as I once read about in a story book. Oh, Dad, I knew our boy would always think of us, having an honorable father like you!"

4.

It was in the early afternoon when the team drew up in front of Mr. Peter Silver's office in the thriving town of Stockton. Mr. Silver was a Portuguese by birth, an American citizen by choice, a respected resident by strength of character, his true name being Pedro Silva, but he had changed it, as he once explained to a crony, to gratify the darn fool notions of some society-crazed women relatives. Mr. Silver was a self-made man, and could be proud of his job.

His hair was now snow-white, but his dark eyes had lost nothing of their old fire. He had, like most of us, a dual personality. As Pedro Silva he was inclined to be hot-tempered, intense in his likes and dislikes, sometimes soft-hearted, bordering on the sentimental, then again hating as only a Latin can hate; as Peter Silver, he had learned to curb his temper and his emotions. Years of contact with the northern races had given him a more equitable, deliberate and often more just view of life. But whatever personality was in the ascendency, he was always a man worth meeting and knowing.

He was seated behind a solid oak desk, a sturdy, strong man of sixty. When Van Doorne entered he arose courteously:

"I believe you are the division manager of Carpenter & Singer?" he inquired, while shaking hands.

Van Doorne smiled his acquiescence, and when Mr. Silver asked him what he might do for him, he astonished that shrewd trader by asking if he had

any horses for sale. By Jove, there was manna from Heaven! for every stock owner was at his wit's end to feed his animals. But without showing his elation, he said smoothly:

"Possibly, how many head would you want?"

"Well, sir, I would like to get a quotation on seventy-seven head of good, average work stock."

Mr. Silver thought the number rather strange, but he did not allow this feeling to interfere with the bargain.

"Let me see, seventy-seven head, well, I guess I could let you have them at one hundred and fifty a head."

"Whew," exclaimed the young man, "but that is a stiff figure, in fact, very much higher than the market price. This is another dry year, you know."

Mr. Silver knew, but he also thought he knew that very probably Carpenter & Singer wanted extra work stock to rush their irrigation works, and therefore would be willing to pay well.

"Well, young man, that is my price. I cannot take anything less. It is a fair price at that."

Van Doorne appeared lost in thought, then he took a pencil and pad from the table and calculated quickly.

"That is ten thousand nine hundred and fifty dollars," he said. "Well, Mr. Silver, suppose you give us a written option on seventy-seven head of average work stock for that amount, good for three days."

Mr. Silver was quite agreeable, rang the bell for a stenographer, dictated the option, signed it when presented to him, and handed it to the man on the other side of the desk, who looked it over carefully and after folding it, placed it inside of his coat pocket, and then said:

"I shall now be glad to take your check for that amount, Mr. Silver, and call the matter square."

Mr. Silver thought it was a joke; he had as yet heard nothing of the collapsed bridge, and when his visitor proceeded with the narrative, he became interested, finally interrupting:

"That is quite a story, but what have I to do with this?"

"Just this," countered Van Doorne, "you are on old Captain Logan's bond and we shall have to sue you with him and get a joint and several judgment against you, and inasmuch as he cannot respond, you will have to pay. You know you have assessed the damage correctly yourself. I have it in writing."

In his younger days, Pedro Silva would have been very angry at this effrontery, but he had gray hair now and had become wise in his generation. From a fiery, rather quarrelsome young Portuguese, he had grown into a thoughtful American, and he knew when he was caught.

"Come now, young man," he said smiling, "you know very well that you could not have sold those horses for thirty dollars a head. Who would have bought them? No one has feed."

"Oh, no, Mr. Silver, nothing doing along that line. Your own signature contradicts that statement, but let me tell you another story."

And Van Doorne, who knew only too well that no jury would ever grant more than thirty dollars a head damages, or a total of about twenty-two hundred dollars, and that a law suit against this old, sturdy and beloved citizen would be a far more costly proposition, now quietly told the story of poor old Mrs. Logan, the dying woman in the window, who was thinking kindly thoughts of her veteran hero and her beloved son.

When he finished, Mr. Silver looked grave and serious and Pedro Silva had tears in his eyes, and finally that dual personality asked gruffly:

"Well, out with it, what is your proposition?"

The answer came promptly. "I shall suggest to Mr. Carpenter that he forget our lawsuit, sir, if you will make the same suggestion to the Board of Supervisors, so that they will forget their alleged claim against our corporation, and see that they replace the old bridge with a modern structure, as should have been done long ago."

"Well," said Mr. Silver cautiously, "you may overestimate my influence, but I shall try. What else?"

"Oh, the balance is easy. You stay on the old Cap's bond, will you, and see that he is re-elected?"

"Sure shot," said Pedro Silva, "you can bet on that."

5.

A few minutes later the three men entered through swinging doors into the bar room of a nearby hotel, for Mr. Silver had courteously invited Mr. George Jeffries to join the procession. At the first libation, the old financier bowed and said:

"Here is to your good health, gentlemen!"

Following the prevailing custom, Van Doorne motioned to the barkeeper, who promptly refilled the glasses.

"And here is to you, Mr. Silver, and happy to have met you!"

If they thought they could not adjourn, they had underestimated Mr. Jeffries' sense of propriety, for that humble knight of the saddle once more gave a sign to the official behind the mahogany, who refilled the glasses with liquor and accepted the cowboy's invitation to "join in." Then the redoubtable George slowly turned on his high heels and said:

"And here is to the dear old lady in the window, that she may live long and be cured. Here's how!"

"Amen," said Mr. Peter Silver, or was it Pedro Silva who spoke?

6.

A few days later Mr. Carpenter was seated behind his huge plain desk in the main office of "the firm" at San Francisco.

One of the regularly retained counsel of the corporation had just finished explaining to him the legal side of the Stockton slough disaster and as-

sured him—as the grizzly old cattleman quite well understood—that the county's suit could easily be resisted, if any should be brought, for the broken and rotted specimen of timber, which his men had gathered, would prove a complete defense.

The corporation president listened with ill-concealed impatience. He had before him the full report of the mishap, including what had transpired in the office of his fellow pioneer, Peter Silver, at Stockton, and that part of the report he had read with sardonic satisfaction. Always direct, to the point of incivility to all on his pay roll, especially those who were not direct producers, he broke in rudely on the lawyer's explanation:

"Never mind theorizing about a defense for a law suit; any fool would know about that. There won't be any suit." He smiled grimly: "Peter Silver knows when he's beaten—pioneers are not theorizing idiots!" And he arose sturdily, arrogantly terminating the interview by stamping out of the room, not, however, before barking to the office chief:

"Send Van Doorne a telegram and tell him to proceed to the East," and as a parting shot to his high-priced counsel, he added: "That's a young man who knows not much, but something. I taught him. Once in a while he uses his head, and that's more than most lawyers do. Good afternoon."

CHAPTER X
Shipping Thoroughbreds

1.

THE west-bound freight had entered the Omaha stockyards from Chicago on its way to the coast cities. With a blowing of whistles, a clanging of bells and a grinding of brakes, it had finally come to a standstill on a switch track located in the center of the yards.

The usual bedlam of noises smote the cold December night air. Trainmasters, slips of yellow tissue paper in hand, were giving orders to train crews and tower men; switching bosses and their men were running back and forth, cursing and shouting; heavy freight trains thundered in and thundered out again, the lighter kind, tolling their warning, darted here and there and everywhere. Everything seemed to be in a hopeless confusion, but underneath it all the great controlling forces of the railroad administration worked smoothly and swiftly.

The yard was brilliantly lighted by huge overhead arc lights. The men in the towers worked with precision. Trains were made ready to proceed to the outer switch in a short space of time, there to await the orders of the division train dispatcher.

The west-bound freight train was no exception to this. The three cattle cars, loaded with blooded

bulls for the VH stock ranch of Carpenter & Singer had been detached from the end of the train and shunted onto the side track. Gondolas, destined for northern and southern points, had been cut out and sent to other tracks, new cars had been added, the engine had gone to the round house and the train crew had left the caboose to scatter to their more permanent homes.

Two of these cattle cars contained twenty animals each, but the center car held only ten, five on each side of a bulwark of baled hay, placed crosswise in the middle of the car. The bales, arranged in two rows, had a free space of three feet between them, which was partly filled with the grub chest of the two men accompanying the cattle, and partly by their baggage, consisting of prodpoles, lanterns, ropes, roles of blankets and satchels. It also served as a resting place and an observatory.

Van Doorne, perched on the bales of hay, listened to the oaths and strong epithets which flowed in a foul stream from the mouths of the vigorous switching crews. Munching a straw, he was whimsically watching his companion, a raw-boned, freckle-faced, twenty-year-old youth from Nebraska, who seemed scandalized at the expressions of impious sentiment. The boy's shocked face amused him. The men were past masters of invective; with them cursing had ceased to be an art and had become an inspiration.

He addressed the world in general and no one in particular:

"Um, yes, they're a tough lot and hard boiled, but they're square—no quitters."

The other stirred uneasily. Suddenly Van Doorne turned to his companion:

"Lem, you're going to stick, aren't you?"

The boy squirmed about and finally mumbled:

"Yes, boss, I am."

There was a moment's silence and the older man said heartily:

"All right, partner, I'll take your word for it. By the way, those two cowboys who were going to take these cars of bulls out to the coast, got drunk and did not show up, but they were not bad hombres. I could bank on them anytime to finish anything they started. Sometimes it was a little hard to get them started, but once on the job, they would not have shipped for a free ride and then deserted—say in Nebraska. A man who does that and abandons livestock that has been entrusted to his care is pretty much of a skunk, isn't he?"

The big, loose-jointed youngster, awkwardly holding a spiked prodpole, looked with suspicion at the ranch manager, whose gun was lightly strapped around his waist, hitting his chaparreros as he walked.

Van Doorne looked up towards the lights above the yards and again addressed no one in particular:

"Well, I've known men shot who deserted live critters in their care, and it served 'em right."

Then suddenly he asked:

"Who is waiting for you in Nebraska, Lem—your mother?"

"Yes, sir."

The cattleman looked closely at this youngster, who evidently had been misreading the signposts on the road of life:

"Lem, at the next stop we are going to wire your mother that you will meet her at North Platte station when the train stops there. We'd better unload anyhow about that time, halter the bulls and rest them for a few hours. Then if you come on with me you will get a decent job with good wages, bed and board at one of the ranches, and together we'll try to save enough of your earnings so that next spring you can send for your mother to come out to California. We shall entertain her in proper style for a few weeks on the ranch, providing you can show her a clean-cut man—not a quitter and a skunk. Are you going to stick, Lem?"

This time there was no hesitation in the boy's voice as he answered:

"Sure, boss, you bet I will."

The two shook hands and then:

"Give me a lift, Lem, through the trap door. I'm tired trying to keep the bulls quiet; I guess you can handle them now for a few hours. See that Mohammed and Brigham Young do not lock horns again. I am going to the caboose and see if I can't get a little rest."

The bulls had quieted down. The shunting and bumping in the yards had cowed them to a more or less sullen submission. Even Brigham and Mohammed were lying on the straw-strewn floor, chew-

ing their cuds, and Straight-horn, always ready for mischief, seemed to remember the drubbing administered with a hardwood pickhandle, when he had cornered his particular bovine enemy and was about to disembowel him with his strong, vicious horns.

2.

Van Doorne climbed the bales of hay to the roof of the car and opened the trap door. He was damp with perspiration, bedraggled from contact with the bulls during a hard thirty hours, and dizzy with fatigue. He heaved himself through the small, square opening and ordered Lem to batten down the door and bolt it, allowing no one to enter.

Ever since they had left Chicago, it had been a battle of brawn against restless bulls, and a battle of wits against the hobos and tramps, who aspired to reach the baled hay as a haven against the biting northern winds, which had howled over the fields of Illinois and Iowa, seeking out all broken places in their wretched clothing.

The train was now moving, and starting toward the rear, he discovered with dismay that his three cars were in the center of a long, heavy train, fully twenty cars away from the caboose. It was a long journey over the tops of the cars, and as he was about to make the third jump, his foot slipped slightly. Looking back towards the engine, he noticed that the big head lights were on, throwing bundles of light on the tracks ahead. The train gathered speed. The car roofs were slippery with sleet and ice, and the increasing motion made the

trip perilous. Moving more carefully, and cursing his folly in having kept on his high-heeled, cowboy boots, he jumped to the next car, but his foot slipped again and he barely made his landing.

A brakeman in the observation tower of the caboose, outlined against the sharp light of a swinging lamp, made frantic motions for him to stop.

The ranchman sat down on the running board of the car, still a long way from the caboose. He knew it would be useless to try to beat his way back to his own cattle cars, for Lem would not let him in, and it would be impossible to make his voice heard above the roar of the wind and train. He was still fifteen cars away from the caboose, so there was nothing to do but sit down where he was.

The train swerved around the curves in the road and the dark clouds, which had been hovering over the landscape, lowered, and seemed to embrace the train in their inky blackness. Suddenly the storm broke loose with terrific fury. Sleet and hail descended from the heavens, first in streams, and then in slanting gusts, drenching the man on the car to the skin. His hands became numb, his mind whirled. Slowly he stretched himself face down on the running board and gripped the swaying boards cowboy fashion, with his knees and elbows, protecting his face the best he could against the fury of the storm.

. How long he lay there he never knew. Only instinct made him cling to his careening mount. After an endless period, the train came to a stand-

still at a siding, where the engine was to take water. The absence of motion brought consciousness to Van Doorne's benumbed brain. He dimly heard shouting voices and saw a swinging light. A heavy tread came towards him and then he felt himself lifted and heard a rough voice say, not unkindly:

"The son of a gun!—stiff like a mackerel, but still kicking." And then he floated off into a comfortable black void.

CHAPTER XI

The Blasphemous Christian Conductor

1.

WESTBOUND No. 11 had traveled steadily during the remaining part of the night, but when the sun shot its first slanting rays over the landscape the train slowed down perceptibly.

When the previous night, the orders from the dispatcher's office had been handed to Conductor Dave Wallace at Omaha, that sulphuric dignitary had commanded brakeman Michael Dumphy, better known amongst his cronies as "Battling Mike," to take one to the engine crew, and he himself entered the caboose to peruse the orders.

"Suffering Moses," he boomed, "that long-haired, Pekinese-China poodle-dog of a dispatcher has certainly doped it out right this time. Ham and . . . . for us at the siding!" And with these cryptic words he slammed the order on a protruding hook over his desk where all such orders were empaled and eventually expired. Going to the small back platform he shouted to Mr. William Johnson, the other brakeman, affectionately termed "Dog-faced Bill:"

"All right, Bill, kick off the blankety-blank old goat!"

The man so addressed stood nearby, lantern in hand. He waved it in the crisp night air, and the train started with a mighty jerk, throwing most of the livestock in the cattle cars to their knees, thus bringing a subdued gentleness into their souls.

The train now moved towards the siding, and the much desired ham and . . . . ! Soon it was brought to a standstill by a hungry engineer, ably assisted by the train crew. Running like goats over the freight cars, they applied the hand brakes on top of each car. In the early nineties few freight trains were supplied with automatic air brakes.

The trainmen of those days were as hardy a lot of men as ever sailed the plains, sure-footed, sure-handed, for both brakes and ride-stealing tramps demanded two-fisted treatment. They weathered the storms like sailors, and the bucking freight cars like cowmen.

2.

The cessation of movement brought Van Doorne out of a deep sleep. His mind began slowly to take count of the changed surroundings. He was flat on his back, deliciously warm, and a few feet above his head his eyes met tongue and groove boards, painted a light green. He could just see through the windows of a small tower in that tongue and groove roof, and he realized that he was comfortably located in a bunk of one of the trainmen in the caboose, rolled into a pair of heavy, gray, woolen blankets. He sighed with satisfaction.

The rising sun colored the Nebraska skies with a glorious yellow, pink and red brush. The clouds had all disappeared and the vault of the heavens looked as if a gigantic janitor of nature had taken a huge sponge and wiped the canopy above clear of every blemish.

The events of the last few days and nights slowly passed through his mind. Two days ago he had gone to the Chicago stockyards with the intention of sending off his shipment of blooded breeding bulls in three special palace stock cars, to be chaperoned across the continent by two capable cattlemen whom he had engaged. When he arrived he found that the men had not put in an appearance. Probably they were comfortably sleeping off the effects of a grand carousal. The railroad company, unable for some reason to furnish the palace cars, had substituted ordinary stock cars, and to cap the climax, the bulls had promptly given battle when loaded. They had come from different breeding farms in lots of three, four and five, and each clan had stuck to its own fellows, bellowing with rage when thrown in close contact with the members of another.

Faced with the prospect of losing some of the valuable animals en route, Van Doorne had returned to his hotel, packed quickly, cancelled his reservations on the Limited, and engaging the only help available, young Lem Erickson, had taken up quarters in the stock cars. The animals were ringed through the nose and might have been tied up to the sides of the cars, but the ranchman, abhorring

cruelty to animals, realized that the sudden starting and stopping of the train would cause great pain to the defenseless brutes.

When the train was in motion the animals seemed subdued, but no sooner were they freed from the anxiety caused by the unusual movements of the cars than they returned to their newly-found animosities.

In the beginning Lem had been practically useless. At his father's farm he had come into contact with one old staid bull, gentle as a good-natured pup, who had lorded it over the string of twenty milk cows. These fiery-eyed thoroughbreds, high strung and overfed on corn, were of a different nature. They frightened the boy, and at first he had hung back each time Van Doorne had ordered him amongst them. He watched his new boss open the hatch in the roof of one of the cars, drop down amongst the fighting animals, and with blows of his club, separate them and then snub one or two of the ringleaders for a short time to the side of the car. Slowly he gathered confidence and towards the end of the second day he had become a real assistance to the older man.

3.

Van Doorne closed his eyes and felt himself slipping once more into a comfortable sleep, when suddenly the aromatic smell of hot coffee and frying ham and eggs smote his nostrils: "Holy mike!" he had not tasted a morsel of warm food since they left Chicago. He and Lem had only taken time to

snatch a cold snack now and then from the grub chest, and for the most part they had been too tired to eat the cold, unappetizing food, saturated with the animal smell of the bulls. Sleep from then on was impossible, for Van Doorne wanted that coffee more than anything he knew. As he slowly turned his head, he noticed his outer clothing suspended from a wire strung across the caboose, and his much-cherished cowboy boots standing near a stove, on which the ham and eggs were sizzling. He turned away again, but the slight movement attracted the attention of the occupants of the caboose, and the comparative silence was broken by a great, rumbling voice:

"Bill, gol darn your sweet hide, I believe mamma's boy in stateroom No. 3 is waking up. Will you see if Percy wants some scented shaving water, or any other blankety-blank toilet accommodation?"

The wayfarer in the blankets sat up suddenly, bumped his head against the ceiling and addressed the company:

"Good morning, gentlemen. Allow me to introduce myself. I am Van Doorne—awfully sorry, but I left my visiting cards in the next room on the piano, but you can take my word for it. I am in charge of the three cars of bulls up in front."

Mr. Wallace regarded him with a scowl:

"The hell you are! Well, I am darned glad to know it, though I can't hardly believe it. I thought you were Moses, King of the Jews! In the meantime allow me to introduce to your Excellency my

distinguished comrades—the Dook of Westminster and the Senator from Nebraska."

Van Doorne grinned: "Sorry, Captain, but I can't come up to your qualification. In fact I belong to that stern Dutch Reform Church that is known for its hard benches and hard-boiled repentant sinners. But I am most honored to be in such illustrious company."

Then when nature would be denied no longer, he pleaded in the easy, cowboy vernacular:

"Say, Cap, if you'll give me a cup of hot coffee and some of the bacon juice, with a chunk of bread to sop it up, I'd like to chip in on the general expenses and I'll promise to sweep out the caboose for you, haul a fresh bucket of water from the tank for the Dook, fill the coal box at the tender for the Senator, and do any other stunts you may be able to think of."

Mr. Wallace's face relaxed: "You will, will you? Well, a little work won't hurt a fancy buck like you. Jump down and sit in. If Dog-faced Bill here hasn't inhaled all the eggs in the place, we'll fix you a couple. I guess you're square, but that funny shirt of yours looks kinda suspicious to me"—and here followed a violent eruption, in which Mr. Wallace fluently and effectively reviewed the ancestors of all silk-shirt manufacturers in the United States.

By the time the atmosphere had cleared itself of the fumes of this outbreak, Van Doorne had taken a place on an old cracker box, obligingly drawn up by Battling Mike and had fallen to. The breakfast

rites were soon finished and the cowman gathered up the tin cups, plates, knives and forks, placed them in the washing bucket standing outside on the platform and then taking a broom from a hook on the wall began to sweep out the caboose.

Mr. Wallace approved with a grunt, which was a marked concession, and made a mental note that Van Doorne might sometime qualify to be an honest-to-God brakeman, and possibly in the more distant future, reach the dizzy heights of a freight conductor, which was a tremendous concession. Then he turned to his subordinates:

"Well, you guys may just as well take your handspokes and clear the train from stiffs. This ain't no lounging parlor." As they filed out, he called after them:

"Don't take any chances with them fellows, for I hear that Seldom Seen is in the neighborhood."

4.

When Van Doorne heard the name of Seldom Seen his face had hardened. He put down the water bucket and coal box, which he had just picked up.

"If that hobo is on this train, I wish to have a few words with him."

Mr. Wallace looked searchingly at his new-found friend:

"Know him?"

"Not personally, but by reputation. He fired three or four of our largest haystacks last year on the lower San Louis Islands. Some of the cattle

starved in the outlying pastures. Afterwards one of my best men was drowned endeavoring to swim those cattle to the mainland during the high water. Yes, I want a few words with him."

He took off his chaperreros, slipped his gun in a holster under his left arm, between his much-abused silk shirt and coat, and turning to the Duke of Westminster and the Senator, declared that he was ready to go with them. The conductor smiled grimly and nodded his approval. Then he gave his orders:

"Bill, you go to the left of the train, and Mike, you to the right, Dutch, here, will walk over the cars and see that no one is hidden there, and by blankety, blankety, blank, let 'em have it good and plenty!"

5.

In passing the stock car Van Doorne said:

"Lem, if you can, make friends with that blasphemous conductor. He is a real man and a Christian. Last night he climbed on top of the cars, bundled me to the caboose, rolled me in his own blankets, put me in his bed, and probably sat up all night in a hard chair, swearing at me. That man's no quitter. I guess when he swears the angels smile."

And the Duke of Westminster, better known as Dog-faced Bill, and the Senator, who responded amongst his friends to the name of Battling Mike, standing by, heard the remark and said simultaneously:

"Hallelujah!"

Or did the Senator say: "You just bet your boots on that," and did the Dook opine, "You jest bet your old socks full of beer. Quien sabe?"

CHAPTER XII
Red, The Bum

1.

THE warfare between the train crews and the "Knights of the Road" was of old standing—in fact, had been inaugurated when the last spike had been driven in the last tie of the first transcontinental railroad. In times of plenty and prosperity, this warfare decreased in intensity; when times were not flush and economic conditions became strained, it broke out with renewed fury.

These modern knights of the road were divided into two classes—tramps and hobos. The former carried a roll of blankets done up in a canvas square, tied with cotton or manila rope, and containing a change of overalls, an extra pair of shoes, a couple of towels, etc. They were rather substantially dressed and often had some change in their pockets. The vast majority of them were immigrants to western America; most of them from Europe, some of them from Canada and the eastern States.

They took possession of empty freight cars, spreading their blankets on the hard floors or sometimes the loose grain in the open gondolas furnished an excellent sleeping place. They occasionally broke into freight cars to get food, but were

not thieves by nature. Known as "Weary Willies," or "Willies" for short, they would give battle to the train crews and were ugly customers to handle. A tie of rough freemasonry held them beholden to each other, and they always assisted a fellow found in a tight place.

A number of them were loose laborers out of a job. Many of today's radicals are the pupils of these same tramps, who often suffered unheard of injustice and cruelties at the hands of their employers or at the hands of venal minions of the law.

In the eighties and nineties, even later, exploiting workers was favorite sport amongst unscrupulous labor agents and gangforemen. Laborers were hired wholesale in large cities by employment agents and shipped to railroad, canal, dam-building or other camps. Sometimes the men paid their last dollar to get employment, and upon arrival were often put to work under unspeakable, unsanitary conditions; rough food, rougher treatment and insults, if not blows were their fate. If they quit, so much the better; if they tried to stick it out, at the end of two or three weeks, they were fired and newcomers took their places. The labor turnover in such camps was often thirty to forty percent a week. The foremen and strawbosses and the employment agencies split a "swag" weekly, which netted to each often ten times the amount of their wages. Some of these camps had three crews—one coming, one working and one going. The laborers, at the end of an all-too-short job, were handed a pay check on the company's store, and by the time the charges were de-

ducted for tobacco or other things sold at exorbitant prices, little was left. Men were hired in the West at 75c a day and found, and bilking the poor devils was by no means uncommon.

In most States constables and justices of the peace did not receive fixed salaries, but were recompensed on a fee basis. This opened wide another door of abuse against these floating laborers. If, in the neighboring towns they complained to the authorities, they were asked for their means of support, and having none, they were promptly run in. Country constables were quite proud of their reputations of being experts at "rushing the bums." The constable received his fee for each arrest; "His Honor" received his fee for "dispensing justice," and the sheriff was gratified to put another vagrant in the county chain gang for thirty days, as the county roads and bridges were often badly in need of repair. The sheriff drew money from the public treasury for their board, so everybody, including the county taxpayer, was satisfied—everybody with the exception of the tramp, of course, but who cared for the outraged feelings of a wanderer?

Unless help was very badly needed at the farmhouses in the middle West, they were as welcome as a blizzard in May. The farmers distrusted the floaters, hiring only men known in the neighborhood. So the tramps naturally took to the railroads, beating their way east and west, north and south, as they thought some work beckoned them.

2.

The hobos, known as "stiffs," were of a somewha different stripe. These men abhorred work as a ma dog abhors water. They were true children of th open air, loquacious, sarcastic, sometimes witty generally vicious and often criminal.

They carried few blankets or other impediment except a dirty bandana handkerchief, in which al their worldly goods were knotted, and which wa known as their "turkey." They were often arme with gun, knife or brass knuckles; they traveled i gangs, occasionally accompanied by a kidnappe youth whom they used for the vilest purposes Vicious to the core, filthy, lousy and lazy, having lingua franca of their own, they still had a code o ethics which was rigidly, even murderously en forced. "Snitching" on their fellows to the authori ties or ranch owners meant swift and certain ven geance.

Many would steal chickens, fire hay stacks o farm houses, hamstring cattle, leave gates open an so on. They pitched regular camps along a strea or railroad track near a culvert and burned dri wood or spare railroad ties for the camp fires. I old picked-up oil cans they prepared their famou hobo stew, consisting of potatoes, vegetables chicken, bread and other ingredients, all begged o stolen, and woe to the officer or ranchman wh singlehanded would invade such a camp. Dis charged felons, however, found a rousing welcom there.

The hobos belonged mostly to the northern races —Americans, Britishers, Hollanders, Scandinavians, Germans, Swiss and an occasional negro, but very seldom Portuguese, Italians or other so-called "undesirable immigrants," and a Jew almost never. Was it a perverted love of liberty that made these Nordics join such sorry descendants of Robin Hood?

3.

Seldom Seen was a King amongst them. Stories of his exploints against organized society, of his ferocities against his own fellows, who he believed had double-crossed him, were whispered in all the camps of the West. He had a lieutenant of whom most people judged more mildly, known as Red, the Bum; a strange and queer friendship and devotion existed between them. Red was the scout; he was the Jackall who hunted with the Lion, and thousands who knew Seldom only by hearsay were acquainted with this little, renegade Irishman. Both were notorious freight-car robbers, and conductors and trainmen had been repeatedly called on the carpet in the Division Superintendent's offices to give explanations why they did not stop the robberies. Once in a while a superintendent grew sarcastic, asking if a nicely marcelled and manicured nurse was wanted to look after them and the valuable freight entrusted to their care. So every railroad man hated and feared them.

4.

As the trio started forward, one of the hobos had caught sight of them and by grapevine telegraph,

word was passed along. In an inconceivably short time each had left the brakebeams and other sheltering places and was now sitting near the fence, acting as if he never had stolen a ride in his life.

The brakemen, aware that as soon as the train started these men would make a flying leap for the brakebeams or connecting rods, were determined to make it difficult for them, and ordered them off the railroad right-of-way and over the barbed wire fence. They began to obey sullenly, but a few well-placed cracks of the hardwood brake handles accelerated their speed, and once safely across the fence they indulged in many ribald jokes at the expense of Mr. Dunphy and Mr. Johnson.

The man on top of the cars was spared, for they identified him by his rolling walk on his high-heeled boots as a cattleman, and they had been occasionally known to "wing" a long distance defamer.

Wandering forward, the trio reached the engine; exchanged some bantering talk with its crew and the forward stationed brakeman and then resumed their march back. Arriving midway they stopped. The brakemen posted themselves there, having a view of the whole train and being able to reach any point in quick order, declaring loudly to their friend on top of the cars that they would stick around until the train moved, and would crack the head of any blooming stiff who tried to jump on. There they would stay until the caboose flashed by and then swing themselves on the rear platform.

Van Doorne warned Lem: "Those blackbirds on the other side of the fence need watching. I am

going back to get the water bucket and coal box; after I have filled them I shall pass here again and you may carry them to the caboose and stretch your legs. Have any sleep last night?"

"Yes, boss, fine. The bulls were all quiet."

"Good. Had anything to eat?"

"Sure, ate a big hole in the supplies."

Van Doorne started toward the caboose, jumping from car to car. He was so engrossed in the slippery roofs that he paid no attention to anything else, but just as he was ready to climb down the iron ladder on the side of the car, he glanced around and a most extraordinary sight greeted his eyes.

A red-haired hobo, whom Van Doorne recognized as Red, the Bum, was seated on the discarded coal box about one hundred feet in the rear of the train. Bunches of carroty hair stuck through holes in his tattered hat; in his left hand he held the water bucket, upturned, the bottom of which he belabored with a stick. With the accompaniment of an infernal music he cheerfully abused Mr. Wallace, who stood between him and the caboose.

The conductor, huge of girth, heavy of limb, and red of neck, was blowing like a porpoise, while Red was describing, with decided lack of elegance, but astonishing genius, all of Mr. Wallace's shortcomings. His patter, in a high falsetto voice, ran something like this:

"Look at the fat slob. I bet he weighs two hundred and forty pounds net and he's afraid to fight a hundred and twenty pound runt like me. Look at

the big-bellied Boston bean pot, with a red neck like a turkey gobbler and shaking in his boots with fear. Where's your guts?"

Mr. Wallace let out a roar like an enraged bull and charged. But Red did not have the least ambition to come in personal contact with the huge, hairy, powerful fists of the conductor. He knew that one swipe of the bear-like paws would put him in the hospital for months, so he picked up the coal box and bucket and fled like a deer a hundred feet or so, where he resumed his descriptive and musical lecture. This performance was repeated several times.

Eventually the conductor was quite out of breath. He conveniently remembered the advice of the company's doctor not to overtax his heart, and he stopped short, whereupon Red promptly sat down and re-opened the interrupted concert. Mr. Wallace glowered at him, rage written in every line of his powerful face. Assistance from the brakemen was out of all question, for even if they had been near, it would have been strictly against his ideas of discipline to accept their help. Having to maintain order, not only as to tramps and hobos, but also amongst his hard-headed crew, he had made it a point to show his "inferiors" that he feared nothing, and his great physical strength fully backed up his mental courage.

He glanced back with apprehension lest he might see some of his satellites taking in his ridiculous position, a position which grew worse after each charge that he made; for while he was growing

shorter of breath from running and from evicting a large vocabulary of unprintable language, the hobo seemed to have gauged the situation to a nicety, and his flow of language was fully equal to that of the conductor. Shooting at a larger target, he made bull's eyes without difficulty.

Mr. Wallace's face, therefore, showed considerable relief, when, instead of the Duke or the Senator, he saw the cattleman slowly coming towards him, and with the relief came an inspiration:

"Dutch, have you got your gun with you?"

"Of course," smiled Van Doorne.

"And can you hit him in the foot?"

"That's my specialty," answered the other.

"Then by the blankety-blank Devils of all former, present and future ages and creations, hit him in the foot so that I can get a swipe at him and I'll give you my next month's pay check." And Mr. Wallace meant it.

Now a self-respecting cowman would never shoot at another man who was not armed unless it might be in protection of life or property, or to avenge a personal insult from a man who deliberately kept himself out of range of personal combat, and he had no personal quarrel with Red. He was about to speak when he was freed from the embarrassment by the shrieking of a whistle, and the thundering of the approaching Overland Limited, which was to pass the No. 11 freight at the siding.

With astonishing agility for one so out of breath, Mr. Wallace ran back to his train and stood at his

post on the rear platform of the caboose, waiving at the trainmen of the now slowly passing passenger express. With like, but less surprising agility, had Red, the Bum, thrown the coal box and water bucket to one side. He, too, had shelved the fierce animosity which was kindled in his heart, when he had offered to fill the bucket and box at tank and tender, in return for a cold handout, and had met, not only with refusal, but with a scandalous volley of abuse from the head dignitary of the train. But he had by no means forgotten his grudge to such an extent that after deftly swinging himself on a brakebeam as the train slackened its speed while passing by the caboose of No. 11, he should refrain from an insulting gesture at the late enemy, now enthroned on his own bailiwick.

When the dust and smoke had cleared away, Van Doorne gathered up the bucket and coal box from the side of the right-of-way and returned to the caboose. Mr. Wallace eyed him with suspicion, but as there was not a glimmering of a smile on the cowman's face, he sighed with relief. He cleared his throat a few times and then, red of countenance and strangely bashful for so aggressive a gentleman, he said:

"That little incident remains between us, doesn't it?"

The cowman's eyelids never fluttered. "What incident?" he asked innocently. "Nothing has happened as far as I know."

Mr. Wallace produced from his pocket a fresh plug of Horseshoe Cut. Bestowing this on Van

Doorne, as a sovereign might bestow a decoration, he boomed:

"Have a chew and keep the plug," and he gave Van Doorne a slap on the back that nearly floored him.

"Thanks awfully," said the latter, pocketing the plug, for to have done otherwise would have been a very serious breach of etiquette. Then he picked up the bucket and coal box again and asked the Monarch:

"How long before we start?"

"Oh, about half an hour—when the Overland Mail has gone by."

CHAPTER XIII
A Norwegian Settler

1.

THE westbound Overland Limited had passed out of sight in a cloud of whirling snow and the No. 11 freight was still standing on the side track waiting the passing of the eastbound United States Mail, made up of a powerful engine, two straight mail cars, one combined mail and express car and a light caboose. It covered the distance between Chicago and San Francisco in little more than two days and had the right of way over all other trains; even the limited passenger trains had to stand meekly at the sidings when this lordly flyer flashed by.

Lem had gone back to the caboose to straighten his cramped limbs and to make friends with the train crew, while Van Doorne opened the trap door in the roof of the center cattle car and eased himself down on the bales of hay. The blooded animals had been bountifully fed and watered and were quietly chewing their cuds; the crisp, cold December morning air had freed them of the pestering flies which previously had made their lives a burden.

Arranging some of the hay into a comfortable resting place, he threw himself down. Watching the ruminating animals, he thought of Lem and of

his parents and little sister, somewhere on a farm on the plains of Nebraska. How could he find the key to the boy's heart, which now seemed to be so tightly shut against the world? Just then the youth's lumbering steps sounded above his head. Van Doorne invited him to come in and lie down beside him in the hay.

"How long before the mail train will pass, Lem?"

"I don't know, sir, but the conductor said we might expect it any minute. That's the reason I came back here to see if I could be of any help to you."

"Fine," retorted the ranchman, "when the train starts, I want to see if I cannot get another snooze in this smelly hay, but in the meantime I want you to see the fun."

The youth looked rather puzzled, as he could not imagine any fun on that cold December morning, far out on the plains. But Van Doorne continued:

"You see the two brakies, watching to see that no hobos board the train? Well, you may also have noticed that the bums along the fence are slowly moving in the direction of the engine. Immediately after the passing of the mail train, the conductor will signal to the engineer to start. The brakemen, who are at least twenty cars away from the caboose, must wait there until it passes, or walk towards the end of the train to catch the rear steps. If they go forward the train would have reached such a velocity that they never could make the jump to the caboose steps. Those hobos know that of course,

and soon as the train is well in motion, they will crawl under the barbed wire fence, run towards the train and swing themselves on the brakebeams, bumpers or connecting rods, five or six cars away from the engine. It is a question of life and death with them. They are here on the plains, far removed from any habitation, and the winter is on. In the east it is still colder, so they want to travel west to sunny California. It may be long before another freight will stop at this siding, and being mostly without food or blankets, they will take desperate chances to board this train now."

A great puff of smoke was seen in the distance, and in a few minutes the United States Mail thundered by in an enveloping cloud of smoke and steam. The whole train bed shook when the mass of steel, traveling at the rate of seventy miles an hour, passed over it.

Dave Wallace, the conductor, leaned far out from the caboose platform and shouted to one of the brakemen, who promptly transformed himself into a living wigwag machine. The engineer blew his whistle, the fireman tolled the bell and the freight train was under way.

As soon as it had gathered some speed, the hobos crawled under or over the fence, ran in the direction of the moving train and one after another jumped on and disappeared under the cars, hanging to whatever they could find. Failure meant being ground to death under the wheels.

Van Doorne now began that most difficult operation of opening the heart of a rebellious youth:

"At the next station, Lem, we shall file the message to your father and mother. You better give me their address now."

With awkward fingers and a crooked smile, Lem wrote down the desired information, but did not hand it over right away.

"Out with it, Lem, what's the trouble?"

The boy confessed that he did not have the necessary money to send the message.

"Who told you that you would send the message? Didn't I say **we** would send it, so what are you talking about? Is there a decent hotel in North Platte, and do you know what they call it?"

"You bet I do," said the youth. "Everybody knows the Mansion House."

"H'm. Do they give you a pretty good breakfast there?"

The youth nodded.

"Didn't you say the farm of your family is about twenty miles away from North Platte?"

Again he received an affirmative nod.

"Well, we shall be in North Platte early tomorrow morning, and it will be a long, cold ride for the old folks to come in, so suppose we telegraph them that breakfast will be ready at the Mansion House —then we shall telegraph the hotel to have a fine meal prepared for four, because the little sister you spoke of must come in town with them, and then suppose I give you $10.00 on account of the wages you are going to earn in California, and suppose

further that you pay for the breakfast—and afterwards buy a pipe and jar of tobacco for the old man and something for your mother that she would never think of getting for herself, and don't forget some gimcrack for the kid. Finally, suppose you tell your mother your plans to have her come to California and return with you in the spring. Now how's that?"

The cowman did not wait for the answer, but got up and opened his satchel from which he pretended to take out a long, slender buckskin money bag. Bending over, he dextrously slipped his money bag from his shirt bosom and then stood up. He extracted a ten dollar gold piece and handed it to him, saying:

"On trust, Lem."

The other answered: "On trust, boss, thank you."

2.

The ice was broken. All that was necessary now was to give the boy an opportunity and he would pour out his story of woe, his real and imaginary grievances, his disappointments in the past and his hopes for the future.

"Pretty rough sledding back in Nebraska for the old folks and for you, isn't it, kid?"

"You bet," and then came a torrent of words in which the boy told of the hardships his family had gone through, how at the time he was a little shaver and before his sister was born, they had come from Norway and ever since that time, it had been a ques-

tion of battle with the elements and with the lack of funds to keep the wolf from the door. He told of the endless chores, of the gradual disappearance of their savings, and how his father, a kindly man, had become hard and bitter, how his mother, whom he could remember as a smiling young woman, had now become faded and discouraged, and how even the little sister carried on her young face the traces of the continual fight against adverse circumstances.

Once launched, nothing could have stopped the flow of pent-up feeling which gushed from the lips of the youth.

"They called us square-heads," he said, "but my God, I wish they had been square with us when we came here."

His father had told him of the highly-colored illustrations in the pamphlets and folders that the great American land companies, allied with the railroads had scattered over all Europe, giving bright promises to those who would leave their homes. It was all so much easier than acquiring additional land on the Norwegian Almenning. He told of their homestead in Norway which had been in the family for several centuries. It had given a frugal but happy living to the occupants, but in an evil moment his father had decided to sell it, even against the intuitive warning of the mother, for he had listened to the dulcet tones of the pied piper's flute.

He half remembered what they had experienced when they were herded in overcrowded quarters on Ellis Island, penned up with the scum of Polan

and Galicia. He described the barren plains to which they had been transported, where nothing but bleak country and an unsubdued nature welcomed them. He spoke of the local money lenders who had charged heavy rates of interest, often 12% a year, monthly compounded, demanding a fee besides to make the loan.

His father had become an ever more exacting task master. He knew that the latter acted for the preservation of himself and his dependent family, for the man never spared himself, still the wings of the boy's soul were beating against the bars of fate which held him and his family imprisoned. It had been years of hard work and very, very little play. Lem saw the years pass by in an everlasting round of work and chores. He very dearly loved his patient mother who invariably spoke the quiet, supporting words. He loved his kid sister, and even towards his father he felt a budding friendship, but Lord, how he wished to be free and spread his own wings.

Van Doorne fully understood the bitterness in the heart of the youngster and he longed to help him to grow up to be a useful citizen, and not be carried in the wrong direction.

The boy was relieved in having unbosomed himself and soon forgot his troubles in the joy of the morrow's reunion and in the contemplation of just how he would flash out the ten dollar gold piece, pay the breakfast bill and tip the astonished waitress.

At last the No. 11 freight pulled in the station o
Fremont. Van Doorne took the two telegrams
which he and Lem had gotten up together and i
a few minutes the messages were on their way.

CHAPTER XIV
Seldom Seen

1.

AS he left the station he was confronted by a burly looking man with a roll of blankets strapped to his shoulders, who seemed suddenly to have appeared from nowhere.

"Boss, do you need another hand to help you with them cattle?"—the stranger jerked his thumb in the direction of the cattle cars.

The answer was negative. Van Doorne proceeded towards the outer track, to which the freight train had been switched, but he-of-the-blankets followed him.

"Say, boss, if you don't want another hand, couldn't you give me a lift?"

There was something so pleading in the man's voice that the ranchman whirled around and searched his face.

"I'm going to the coast," he said, "where do you want to go?"

"Only as far as North Platte," the other answered. "Even if you should hire me, I can only go that far."

"Humph, you are not a liar, anyhow," retorted Van Doorne. "Why didn't you tell me that you wanted to go to the coast and then desert en route?"

The floater growled that he wasn't that kind of a guy, but that he wanted to get to North Platte, where he would find a home with his sister and brother-in-law. Again a haunted, pleading look came into the man's face.

"Show me your hands," ordered Van Doorne.

The man held out his hands, which were those of a hard worker, and there was a callous place between the thumb and first finger.

"A mule skinner, eh?" queried the ranchman.

"You bet," was the answer.

"Drive with the gee and haw line?"

"Always when I have a chance."

"Put down that roll of blankets and open it up."

The man slipped the roll from his shoulders, untied the cord, unrolled the blankets and showed the usual paraphernalia of a traveling workman. Then he carefully remade the roll and looked up in his pleading way at the young ranchman.

"You're beating it, aren't you? . . . . scared?"

"Yep."

"Officers after you?"

The man shook his head, but added:

"Worse than that."

Van Doorne made a sudden decision: "All right," he said, "Come along. I'll sign you on, on the railroad contract. I've the right to take two extra men with me, but my friend, listen: You will have to sleep with us in a small compartment between those bales of hay." He nodded towards the car and then

continued: "I'm a very light sleeper and rather fidgety. Take my advice, when you find a place to sleep, stay there until daylight."

"I understand, boss, you'll have no reason for complaint."

Van Doorne, after calling to Lem to open the trap door and let the stranger in, took from his pocket the railroad shipping contract and wrote on the line left blank for that purpose, the name of "William Anderson," remarking that that name would do just as well as any other.

Just as the train began to move, he was startled to see a flying figure which he recogniezd as that of Red, the Bum, detach itself from the bushes near a water tank, make a flying leap for the train and disappear under one of the cars.

"So that's it," he mused. "Our friend beat it up here on the Overland Limited and waited until our train caught up. That means that Seldom Seen is also with us, or somewhere ahead of us. That will bear watching."

2.

When the train again came to a stop to let the Pacific Limited go by, Van Doorne came from the caboose, where he had been engaged in a heated argument with the Senator as to the merits of cowmen and the demerits of sheepmen, and joined Lem and the stranger in the cattle car, announcing that he filled in the name of the new hired hand as "William Anderson," and asked if that were correct?

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"William" smiled. "My name is Albert Bronson," he said, "and that's the reason that most people do not call me Bill for short."

The frightened look had left his eyes, and when Van Doorne suggested that it was about time to eat, and he was given a full share of the meal notwithstanding that the supply in the grub chest was low, he thawed out and drawled:

"You asked me if I was scared. I sure was. You've been awfully square with me and I want to tell you why I wanted to get away in such a hurry."

Van Doorne held up his hand: "Don't tell anything you would be sorry about, Al. No questions are asked nor any explanations demanded. Perhaps you would do better in telling your troubles to a constable."

An almost savage look came into the eyes of the newcomer. "Constable," he snorted. "What good or justice would the likes of me get from such crowbait? Why, he'd run me in so's to make another arrest fee, but you're different, and what I saw last night I've got to tell someone."

This was the tale which was resting so heavily on the soul of Mr. Albert Bronson:

"I migrated to this country from Sweden a year or so ago. I'd been travelin' around looking for work and one of those employment sharks had promised me a job if I'd pay him $5. I did . . . . it was all the money I had in my jeans, and I started to work at a railroad camp. After I had been there

for a month, I was kicked out, even though the mules and me got along fine together. When I first came they was skinny and ragged as hungry rats, but when I left, you could have used their hides for a mirror to comb your hair by." He sighed regretfully.

"The foreman was in cahoots with the employment agent and I had to go. It was an old story and when I finally settled up at the country store, there was only $3.00 comin' to me, see. I grabs 'em and made up my mind to beat my way back to my sister's home. She and her man and the kid has a hard struggle themselves, so last fall I got out, but now I wish I hadn't.

"Well, anyhow, last night I pitches camp in a willow brake near the railroad track. About three o'clock in the morning I wakes up hearin' loud voices. Through the bushes I can make out thirty or forty hobos, who had pitched their camp near the tracks and is gathered around a pile of burnin' ties. I guess they had broken into a freight car and stolen a box of liquor, for most of 'em was fightin' drunk. Five or six was playin' poker, when suddenly one of the guys, a great big fellow, threw down his cards and with an awful yell, plunged his knife into the body of the man opposite him. I guess he caught him cheatin'. That tough bunch hardly pays any attention. That got me—the cool way they took it. The fellow that done the killin' seemed to be the king of the camp, and they was all scared of him. He and some others heaved the body of the dead man into the burnin' pile of ties and went on

with their cards and liquor. I realizes what would happen to me, if they ever knew that an outsider had seen that murder. I lays still for a while, but I just had to get away, so I picks up my blankets and beats it as quiet as I can. Someone had been prowlin' around and must have caught a glimpse of something movin', for he gave a warnin' yell and several took up the chase. I runs like a scared hound along the tracks, thankful it was a dark night. When I comes to a hole in the ground, I flops down and the fellows behind me runs past. I crawls through a fence and follows that along until I reaches the water tank, where I waits until the eastbound train came in. I get the brakie to let me ride for a dollar to the station where you found me. When we go by the place where it happened I'll show you," he finished with a shudder.

"Did you hear the man who did the killing called by name?" asked Van Doorne, after thinking for a moment.

The other shook his head.

"Well, I think I know his name. That was Seldom Seen, and his confederate, Red, the Bum, is on this train, going to meet his partner. They will talk things over the minute they get together on the brakebeams and, of course, Red, who boarded the train the same time you did, will not fail to mention the stranger with a roll of blankets who got a ride, and whom he may have seen come in on the eastbound train at Fremont. We can expect a visit from our friends, and I am glad of it, having an old score to settle with Mr. Seldom Seen."

All the three men sat in silence for a while and then Van Doorne spoke again:

"You said you bribed a brakeman to let you ride for a dollar. Is that customary?"

The wayfarer nodded. "Those brakemen are a tough lot as a rule. Some of 'em is square and loyal to the company, but they're scarce as hen's teeth,—they only get $65 or $85, maybe, a month, and they know the companies are fightin' a law in Congress compellin' 'em to install automatic safety devices. They've seen lots of their buddies crushed to death, just because the railroads want to save expense. Naturally there ain't much love in their hearts for a company which won't even protect 'em, and if they can make a little on the side without takin' anything from the company's income, most of 'em will do it. They bargain with a tramp, take a dollar or two and let him ride to the end of the division. Now that's all right. A fellow gets a ride for two dollars which would cost twenty dollars in the coaches. The brakeman adds two dollars to his measly wages, and I guess he needs it bad enough. The company ain't out nothin', because the bum wouldn't pay $20 nohow.

"But there's plenty of crooks among them brakemen. They bargain with you and you hand out the kale. Then the brakemen will 'talk it over' with the head brakeman, see, and that guy will come along with a club in his hand and order you off the train. When you tell him you paid two bucks to the other guy, he says he don't know nothin' about that and you'd better move quick. You have to hand over

a two-spot to ease his feelings. Maybe the two comes back after a while and gives you the glad news that the conductor just heard about it and has gotta be fixed up, too. That means two bucks more and if you don't have it, off you go. Why, I've known some of those hyenas would even take a man's necktie or anything else he had that struck their fancy. In the end he'd probably get kicked off anyhow, so he wouldn't 'make no more trouble.' "

Just then the train passed the willow brake where Al had spent the night and he pointed out the fatal spot where the poor outcast had found his funeral pyre.

2.

The men turned in early, for Van Doorne wanted to get a good rest early in the night to be ready for whatever might happen later. Al, who seemed to have no ambition for sleep after the recital of the tragedy of the previous night, declared that he would keep watch. About two o'clock in the morning, Van Doorne felt someone touch him. Immediately he was wide awake and alert. He slid his hand under his left arm where his gun lay. The dim figure of Al, the floater, bent over him, one finger on his lip to impose silence, the other hand pointed towards the roof of the car from whence came a muffled sound as if a great, powerful animal on padded feet were creeping overhead.

"Start the dark lantern, Al," the ranchman whispered, to his elder companion. "Lem, you get a pencil and paper ready."

Al turned the screw which controlled the valve separating the water from the chemical at the bottom of the lantern, and soon a very faint light showed through the shutter in front of the bull's eye.

Gun in hand the ranchman looked intently at the trap door, which moved by some strong force, but the bolts held firm. The muffled noise overhead ceased and there was silence for a few minutes. The three occupants of the car, their nerves taut, strained their eyes in the darkness and listened.

Slowly and cautiously a huge body detached itself from the roof and came sagging down the side of the car, to which it hung with ape-like strength. Van Doorne gripped the arm of the floater, and made him sit down behind a bale of hay, motioning him to get the lantern focused on the gorilla-shaped figure outside. The latter moved with caution, going hand over hand from slat to slat, towards the grilled iron door, keeping meanwhile a firm toehold on the protruding floorboard. When he arrived at the door, he inserted one powerful hand inside, with the confidence and dexterity of an old freight car robber. He was about to withdraw the hasp which kept the door closed, when his hand stopped, paralyzed, as someone whipped out the words:

"Now, Al."

A shaft of light coming from the bull's eye lantern struck him square in the face. And the face depicted a mixture of dumbfounded incredulity and baffled, ferocious rage. The unexpected voice went on:

"So this is Seldom Seen! Take the description, Lem—height, about six feet; shoulders, powerful; arms, long; little finger on right hand mutilated; forehead, low; eyes, green; jaw, heavy; two front teeth gone; cauliflower left ear; mole on left cheek. I guess that's about enough." And Van Doorne laughed softly.

The man outside whose picture stood out clearly in the light of the lantern and outlined against the snow-covered background, growled with rage, but soon recovering his composure and more used to the blinding light, he endeavored again to open the latch and slide back the car door, but he was stopped short:

"Quit that, Seldom, I have you covered and if you make one more move, I'll blow a hole through your dirty carcass, so that your friend, Red, the Bum, can use it for a telescope. And now, listen you dastardly cur. I know you and have an old score to settle with you. It was you . . . . Oh, no I won't tell you where and why, that would make it too easy for you. But I shall give your description to every peace officer in the West, and see that a reward is offered for your capture and conviction of the outrages which you committed last year and in which I am interested. That, however, we shall settle in the regular way. The law will take its course as far as that is concerned. But I happen to know that you murdered a fellow hobo in cold blood last night, that you and your companions burned the body, and that you thought you would catch a witness to that crime in this car.

"Just keep quiet, my friend, all your bellowing is of no avail, and Red, up there is scared stiff, you know. Well, you came here to do away with that witness, didn't you? With him eliminated the law could do precious little to you in this case and you know it, for the hobos who were with you have scattered to the four winds, and none of them would dare to testify against you anyhow. The District Attorney would hesitate to shoulder the country with the heavy expenses of a murder trial, just to avenge the death of a bum, whom no one in the county ever knew by name—you're banking on that now, just as you have banked on similar loop-holes many times before."

The ranchman's voice suddenly broke with pent-up rage, for before his mind came the image of his dead vaquero, who had perished in the cold snow water of the San Joaquin River, in an effort to save the cattle from starvation, when this outlaw before him had burned the haystacks on the islands, where the poor creatures were wintering.

"You dirty hound," he shouted, "I'll give you five seconds to jump from the train, or may God have mercy on your soul!"

Seldom Seen was no fool. He realized that there would be no mercy from this quarter, so with an oath he flung himself backward from the fast-moving train. Down the embankment he rolled, and landed on the thin ice covering the shallow ditch along the right-of-way. That was the last the three men could see of him.

Van Doorne grabbed a prod pole and hit the roo
of the car a couple of times, shouting:

"Beat it, Red, before I come after you."

A slight pattering of hurrying feet on the top o
the car was the prompt answer to the warning.

CHAPTER XV
The No-Skunk

1.

WHEN overland freight No. 11 passed Afalfa Center, Nebraska, an hour before dawn, on that bitterly cold December morning in the year eighteen ninety-three, the blooded breeding bulls in the three stock cars showed no signs of restlessness.

It was different, however, with two of the three men who accompanied them. To Van Doorne, Al was still an uncertain factor. He believed the man's story that he feared for his life. The advent of Seldom Seen had born out his contention; still it seemed well to be careful and he slept the sleep of a hunter. At the least stir in the car he glanced quickly through partly closed eyelids and his hand stole towards the hiding place of his gun.

Albert Bronson was equally restive. Satisfied that Van Doorne had saved his life he was determined to show his gratitude in the only way he knew . . . . work. As the first light came above the horizon he donned his heavy shoes and began operations. Taking a file from the canvas tool bag, he filed the wires of a bale of straw, and bedded afresh the five bulls on either end of the car. Opening a bale of hay he fed the animals. Next he

pushed a bale of straw through the trap door ont
the roof and placed it at the very end, opposite th
forward car. A second bale was rolled over th
running board to the end facing the rear car. Finall
he cut a bale of hay in two and placed half nea
each bale of straw. At the first siding he carrie
the straw and hay to the adjoining cars and bedde
and fed the animals, working quickly and effectively
He filled the water troughs in the car by makin
repeated journeys with two huge buckets to th
tank. Returning to the center car, he cleared u
the space between the two rows of bales. He en
larged the floorspace of what Van Doorne had calle
the bull-cabin, threw out all the accumulated debri
and rearranged the remaining bales in neat line
Then he sat down.

Van Doorne opened his eyes wide and bade him
cheerful good morning. Bronson picked up
bucket, half full of fresh water, produced a piec
of soap and a fairly clean towel and said quietly:

"Everything ready for your wash, boss."

"Thanks, Al, for having thought of that," and h
plunged his head into the cold water.

The sun had risen and the snow along the rai
road tracks sparkled like a sea of diamonds. Bron
son, with the decency of plain people who lead a
out-of-doors life, did not remain, but climbed to th
top of the car and sat there.

After "slicking up," Van Doorne stretched him
self comfortably and gratefully. Life was good aft
all! What did a man want more than to be health

strong and thirty, with a good position and many friends, and to live in a glorious country like the United States, a land he had learned to love.

His eye fell on Lem, who subconsciously becoming aware that someone was gazing at him, stirred uneasily and suddenly awoke. Shaking and stretching himself like a healthy young animal, he realized with a shock that the other men were up. Noticing Van Doorne nearby and Al's heavily shod feet dangling through the trap door, he mumbled that he had overslept and that he guessed he'd better get to work.

The ranchman interrupted him:

"Never mind, son, Al, here, has done all the chores for the three of us." Then raising his voice he called: "Oh, Al, come here and we will plan out our work."

The floater climbed down and Van Doorne suggested that they first have a snack from the contents of the grub chest. This was soon disposed of and then he said:

"Now, Al, when we arrive at North Platte your part of the bargain is over. You have done mighty well. Are you willing to help me for a few hours longer in getting this bunch of bulls rested up a little? If you do I shall be glad to pay you for the time."

Al grunted assent, but added:

"Never mind the pay." He had been treated like a real human being and was going to stay with the outfit until it pulled out from the station.

Van Doorne continued:

"As soon as we hit the station Lem will go to the hotel and look for his folks. We must get in about eight o'clock; do you think the folks will be there then?"

Lem did not know. It was a stiff two hours' drive from the homestead and the family would not start until all the chores were done and the livestock taken care of. On reaching town, the old man surely would not put up the team at the livery stable, but would hitch them to the rack in front of the Mansion House, covering them with blankets and save half a dollar.

"Very well," said Van Doorne, "you look at the hitching rack, and if the team is there you circle around and go in by the back door. You can reach the washroom without being seen. Take a good scrub and put on a clean shirt before facing the folks."

"But I haven't a clean shirt," promptly countered the boy.

Van Doorne produced from the satchel a pongee shirt, the mate of which had so aroused the indignation of Conductor Wallace. To make the acceptance easier, he said casually:

"You can give the shirt back in California if you feel like it. Meanwhile, enjoy it."

Avoiding any embarrassing thanks, he turned quickly to Al:

"You and I will take care of the bulls. I guess we shall be able to pick up a few spare hands to d

the manicuring of these he-cows, and by the time we have all the supplies on the train for the rest of the trip, we shall be about ready for some breakfast ourselves."

2.

Time passed in anticipation of pleasure drags, and in order to help shorten the long minutes and also to awaken the boy's interest, Van Doorne began one of his casual lessons in western lore:

"Did you ever take a really good look at these bulls, Lem?"

"Sure, they are Durhams."

"Well, you better take another look and keep your eyes peeled."

Lem did as he was told. After a few minutes, he said:

"The forward bulls have heavier horns and more curly hair between, than those in the rear car. The curly ones have strong, heavy tails and the smooth ones have nice, slim tails."

"What does that mean? Just accident?"

"No, I 'spose not, but maybe you thought they looked better divided that way."

Van Doorne laughed: "In scientific cattle raising and farming other reasons besides good looks move us to act. The breeding of Durhams is not only an old and honored business, but an old science as well. The rougher bulls are of beef Durham stock; the smoother ones are of the milk strain. The small horns indicate that we are on the high road to breed-

ing a polled race of Durham. When you come t
my headquarters you will see quite a library o
farming and stockraising. One big volume deal
with Durhams exclusively. Do you ever read th
Stockbreeders Gazette?"

"No."

"As soon as you have a little spare cash you bette
subscribe. By the way, did your folks make an
vinegar and cider on the farm this year and use
saccharometer?"

"Say, boss, what is that?"

"Well, that is a little instrument which comes i
handy in preparing fruit liquids like wine, vinega
hard or sweet cider and the like. I will show yo
at our fruit ranch how to use one. By the way, d
you know how to focus a microscope?"

"No, I don't even know what you are talkin
about."

"Well, there are fruit trees of course on the farm
where you live, and where there are fruit trees, ther
are insect pests and fungi, which must be combate
to get a good crop. For this work a set of delicat
magnifying glasses held in a tube and called a micro
scope is necessary. Some of the experimental wor
done by growers and nurserymen themselves wit
their assistants sounds like fairy tales. There is, fo
instance, the importation of lady bugs from Aus
tralia which is very interesting. Perhaps you woul
like me to tell you the story of the caprification o
the fig in California."

Lem's curiosity and interest were aroused. When Van Doorne had finished that wonderful tale of the quest of the illusive blastophaga, the little wasp which did such astounding work in the fertilization of the figs in Asia Minor, and had told how finally an entomologist by the name of West had captured a whole colony of the useful insects at the small Island of Capri off the Italian coast, bringing them to California, liberating them in the fig orchards of the State and thereby making a fertilization of the female figs a possibility, Lem's eyes were shining for the first time in his life with eager longing for knowledge. The ranchman, noticing this, continued:

"No science has advanced faster than that of the newly-discovered farm methods. If you really want to be of real assistance both to your dad and yourself, you study all these things and then instead of being the chore boy and handy man of all work, you will be your father's junior partner pretty soon, and a very valuable one at that. But, by jove, the engineer is blowing the whistle and we must be nearing North Platte."

And so they were. Within a few minutes the train reached the station; the cattle cars were cut out and shunted over to the stock chutes. Goodbyes were said to the train crew, and Lem walked over to Van Doorne:

"When we left Omaha you told me that a man who abandoned livestock in his care was a skunk and should be shot."

"Correct," said the ranchman.

"Well, boss, I'm not in that class and you just bet your last dollar on that." And with that the boy disappeared as fast as he could towards the hotel.

CHAPTER XVI
Uncle Al

1.

THE first car stood in front of the chute. Several loafers, having swung themselves off the brake rods, were now seated like crows on the outside stockade yard, which was divided into numerous corrals. The fence birds offered their assistance to lower the moveable end of the chute against the first car door, but Van Doorne warned them away. He expected that the local constable or his deputy would soon put in his appearance, pursuing the favorite sport of "running in bums."

He was not disappointed, for soon a very capable and husky looking individual, with a shining star pinned to a heavy overcoat, appeared. The ranchman hailed him.

"Hey, there, Cap, I have here three carloads of blooded bulls and want some assistance. Can you pick out three of the meadow larks on the fence who can fork out my cars and bed the cattle afresh? I'll give each of them a dollar for about two hours' work; and if you will look after the job and hold the fort here in the bull cabin, so that none of the buzzards break in, and also receive the supplies which I am going to have sent up, I'll slip you a five spot."

The constable was agreeable, but at the same time, he was watching Al with a hungry eye, for after all, what was the use of neglecting a three-dollar arrest-fee, while earning a fiver?

The ranchman read the thoughts of the minion of the law:

"Nothing doing, Cap. In the first place this man's sister and brother-in-law live here in the county, and in the second, third, fourth and fifth places, the gentleman is a friend of mine." This was said with a friendly smile, but with such determination that the constable promptly forgot all ideas of high financing and became quite tractable. He picked out three of the cleanest looking floaters and ordered them alongside the chute. Then after taking a huge chew he even demeaned himself to the extent of giving a hand.

The first car of bulls was unloaded. After lowering the lip of the chute against the door, Al unfastened the hasp and the door was pushed back. But the frightened animals refused to come out. He therefore mounted to the top of the car, opened the trap door, lowered himself carefully inside, making as few motions as possible, selected the gentlest of the fiery males, and after stroking him and speaking to him, led him by the nose ring to the door and down the chute. Thus encouraged, the others followed. As soon as they were out of the car, he drove them into a separate pen and closed the gates preventing new hostilities.

The switching engineer slowly moved the small string of cars, and the same method was used in un

loading the second and third car of animals, and soon they all stood quietly in their different pens, blinking at the early morning sun.

The constable had ordered all the idlers away from the stockyards, thus securing quietness for the cattle, while epsom salts was put in the water, to relieve the congestion from which the animals were suffering.

The three extras began cleaning out the cars, while Van Doorne and his assistant went to the store to make some purchases. At the harness shop, fifty strong, leather halters were purchased, with brass rings on top of the nose straps. They were provided with swivel snaps, to which long manila ropes were attached. These would be strong in a steady straight pull, but could be readily cut in case of accident.

At the building indicated by a sign as "Feed Emporium and Livery Stables—All kinds of live-stock for sale"—they ordered six bales of straw, to be delivered at once, two bales to each car.

At the drug store they bought up the greater part of the apothecary's stock of asafoetida. Carrying this with them towards the loading corrals, Van Doorne stopped long enough at a shoe store to buy a pair of heavy brogan shoes. At the corral they mixed the medicine in the water.

They found the cars thoroughly cleaned out, the straw delivered, and the constable, who enjoyed ordering the men about in full view of several voters,

was taking pains to see that everything would be shipshape.

Van Doorne haltered one animal after the other, snapping the ropes in the rings under their chins and then winding these around their necks.

He then invited Al for breakfast at the Mansion House. Al dreaded being patronized, but after a little coaxing, accepted, and both men—acquaintances of the rails for less than twenty-four hours—walked like friends of long standing to the place where warm food and drink were beckoning.

2.

The itinerant laborer would soon pass definitely out of the cowman's life. Different from most floaters this one seemed to be considerable of a man. It was not wanderlust or laziness which had driven him to places away from family and friends, but a desire to find work. In those days jobs were generally to be had, for the fast-growing development of the West, far ahead of the normal growth of the population, demanded then and demands now, a large army of temporary workers at different places and at different periods of the year. The woods and the lumber mills in the mountains called in the summer time to hardy ax and other forest-used men. Early in the fall the camps were shut down, and the lumberjacks descended to the plains. Then it was that the raisin grape growers around Fresno and elsewhere in the valleys, needed a great number of hands for picking and curing the first crop of raisins; soon the grain ranchers and the hop growers

in the Sacramento Valley called for additional help; then again the prune growers of the Santa Clara Valley could use more than twenty or thirty thousand extra hands; then the second crop of raisins needed attention, and the men moved from one place to another. One time they were in camps where decency was observed; then again the camps were indifferent; and in many places the outfits were abominable. Little or nothing was done for them and only the barest necessities were furnished.

There was not sufficient room, nor were there accommodations for the ordinary decencies of life; there was almost always a shortage of sleeping quarters, and those were often lousy and foul. Bathing facilities were unknown, washing facilities inadequate. Often the men slept on manure piles to keep warm, during the frosty nights, with only discarded dry-goods boxes or sugar barrels to separate the sleeper from the steaming, stinking refuse. Worst of all were the continually moving, scraping and construction camps, which did the pioneer work on a large scale. Most of the men employed there were foreigners.

The steady ranch and farm hands—generally American bred—kept by themselves, much better taken care of, and did not as a rule encourage much intercourse with the birds of passage. Most of the owners and superintendents seldom came in direct contact with them; this was left to the camp and gang foremen and strawbosses, and they were tyrants indeed—and let us be candid, they often had to be or lose their jobs!

The whole system was vicious, and bred industrial oppression on a large scale, with the accompanying resentment and hatred. Van Doorne hesitated to offer Al a chance to come to the Coast, where he would be deprived of the anchor which he now had to the leeward in his sister and brother-in-law.

But would he be welcome there, Van Doorne wondered. Well, he would soon find out:

"When we pull out, are you going to make for home, Al?"

"Yep."

"How long will it take you to get there?"

"All depends—if I find someone to give me a lift, it'll only take about three hours, but if I have to hoof it all the way, it'll be eight or nine hours."

"Will you be welcome?"

Al grinned: "They better make me welcome, or little Mary—that's their kid—will raise the roof of the house. She and Uncle Al are great friends."

So that was the reason that Al had an Indian rag doll in his blanket roll, which had puzzled Van Doorne a good deal.

Al continued: "I'll be home tonight all right, and after the folks have gone to bed, I'll take a real scrub in the washtub, which I know Sister Mary will place in the lean-to next to the kitchen, and then . . . . ," Al stretched luxuriously, "I'll turn in!"

Just then Van Doorne's eye fell on a sign in a window graced by a barber's pole attached to the sill:

"Palace Barber Shop and Bath Parlors. Shave 15c; haircut 25c; bath with soap and towel 30c, 2 towels 35c."

"Santa Lucia! A bath!"

If there was one thing under the lowering Nebraska skies that the ranchman wanted even more than warm food, it was a real bath in a real bath tub with lots of suds and towels. And all to be had for 35c. But two considerations prevented him. He was the host of Al for that promised late breakfast and Al was hungry; moreover he was sure to take cold.

So he marched past the temptation and with his companion started towards the swinging doors of the Mansion House, marked "Cafe."

CHAPTER XVII

A Family Reunion

1.

IN the common bar-room with its sawdust-covered floor, the usual aggregation of town notables and near notables had gathered around a great red-hot, air-tight stove. The town club was in session. There was the druggist, who had looked over his scanty morning mail and then left the store to the care of his assistant, for it would be several hours before the doctor made his rounds and the prescriptions would be coming in; there was the temporary reporter of the local paper, known for his good nose for news, and other spiritual novelties; there was the postmaster, who did not expect another mail within several hours; there was the town drunk, beloved by his wife and by no one else. There was also the proprietor of the general emporium, the local butcher and cattle buyer, and a few other leading captains of commerce and industry.

They formed the inner circle around the stove. At a respectful distance behind them sat the minor satellites of the Mansion House, mostly composed of paying guests of the house, such as skilled laborers, temporarily out of a job, but whose credit was good,

and finally a few small farmers from the neighborhood.

It was amidst these gentlemen that Al and Van Doorne put in appearance. Now the latter knew that a man in charge of a load of cattle was considered by the worthies of a small town adjoining the loading corrals, with the same expectant affection as a sea captain is viewed by the gentry of the water front.

He sidled up to the bar and declared that he would consider it an honor if all the gentlemen present would join him in a little early morning libation; a cigar or whatnot. This raised him enormously in the estimation of the landlord, and after the courtesies had been disposed of, mine host personally led our two friends into the dining room and instructed the waitress to "see that these gents are well taken care of."

The frowsy but haughty one smiled upon the newcomers. Whenever the boss condescended to introduce a customer personally to the mysteries of the dining room, there was sure to be a solid tip at the end of the meal. Not that the imperious one would ever think of fawning on a customer, no matter what the fee in expectancy might be, for she was too sterling a democrat to indulge in such a lowly demeanor, but she was prepared to shed part of her autocratic ways and admit such properly introduced ones to a footing of friendly equality. Being possessed of a memory of no mean capacity, she rattled off a long list of available dishes.

Van Doorne ordered fruit, cereal, a double portion of ham and eggs with a steak on the side, coffee and a stack of hots, for each of them.

Besides the members of a farmer's family who gave visual and oral evidence of hearty and healthy appetites, there was no one else in the room except the Ericksons. This American-Norwegian family was worth studying. The father sat at one end of the table, dour and silent. He was plainly but neatly dressed and sported what in those days were called pick and shovel whiskers. His upper and lower lips and his chin were clean shaven, while a short beard peeped out from his shirt collar, and ran up in a kind of abandoned way to his ears. Nils Erickson seemed to be saturated with gloom, but he looked a just and upright man. If he had to be hard with others, he was no less hard on himself, and circumstances, not disposition, had made him what he was. One could read character in every line of his face. It was easy to believe that he must have a reputation for veracity in his neighborhood and that any banker would gladly accept him as a moral risk.

While the father was built on heroic, Viking lines, the mother was small and frail, with a gentle, spiritual face. No wonder Lem had wanted to go back home for Christmas. Hers was the submissive spirit of the farmer's wife, who had participated in a fierce struggle for existence in a pioneer country, but who felt herself protected by her stronger mate.

Lem's sister was just a gawky, awkward girl, still all legs and arms, and with the distressing homeli-

ness and frankness of the juvenile, who struggles to become a woman, but still remains a child.

When the two men had entered the dining room, Lem had at once drawn the attention of his kinfolk to his new-found friends, and Nils Erickson had looked their way in a rather hostile fashion. The mother, however, devoted particular attention to Van Doorne and her scrutiny became somewhat embarrassing. She watched the cattleman with the frank and candid eyes of the mother who desires to plumb the bottom of the soul of her son's companion. Satisfied, she turned to her daughter, and promptly rebuked her for indulging in the same occupation that she herself had so recently practiced. But sister's attention could not easily be withdrawn from the high-heeled, cowboy boots, and the gun belt with its contents.

After Al had disposed of the last morsel of food, Van Doorne excused himself and walked over to the table of the Ericksons, where he was introduced. Lem, who had just paid for the family's breakfast and handed out a tip of half a dollar to the dumbfounded waitress, scandalizing his parents, also excused himself, and with Al left the dining room. At a commanding glance from her father, the young girl likewise left the table, and Nils lost no time in coming to the point.

"Why do you take our boy away from us?" he demanded.

The ranchman drawled:

"I thought I had brought the boy back to you."

"That's not here nor there," continued the Norseman. "It is not the question what you have done, but what you're agoing to do. Besides I do not fancy strangers."

The mother flushed and looked reproachfully at her husband.

"Father is much disturbed, you should make allowances."

Van Doorne turned with a friendly smile to the mother. "Mrs. Erickson, I quite understand, though I am accustomed to having people address me civilly. However, I shall gladly volunteer information to you." And then he told the mother the story of the chance meeting with her son in the stockyards, his subsequent talks with the youngster, the latter's rebellion against existing conditions and his own ideas as to how Lem could be assisted. In conclusion he remarked:

"Lem is already learning to handle stock on the cars. If he goes with me to California now, he will be entitled, under the railroad contract, to a free ride back in the passenger coach. Generally the return journey must be made at once, but we have enough influence with the railroad company so that this privilege may be extended.

"He may stay on the ranch with me until spring. I understand that there is not much work to be done on your farm until that time, and when he is needed he will be back. During the winter months he will learn a great many things he never heard of before. He can repeat it each year, for good cattle shippers

are scarce, and all the time he will become more competent.

"This year he intends to use his savings to have you come to California and see the beautiful spring flowers, when they overrun our hills with a riot of colors. We shall take care of you at one of our ranches, Mrs. Erickson," he offered courteously, "and you and Lem can come home together."

"As to your question, sir," he turned to the husband, "why I take your boy away from you, the answer is to help him to become a good American, to go straight and to send him back to you after four months' time a much better man than he was a while ago when he took French leave of you."

While Van Doorne was speaking the mother's eyes had softened, and when he had mentioned the flowers of California a gentle longing came into her face, but when she looked at the silent, stern man opposite her, she said gently:

"Thank you, sir, and God bless you for what you are doing for our boy, but I think I shall stay right here with father."

That austere man of the prairies relaxed his somewhat rigid features. His morose eyes took on a milder, gentler look, and then suddenly yielding to a great rush of tender feeling, he became once more the tractable youth of yore, who had been such an indulgent lover and genial young husband, and he patted his wife's hand in an awkward, gentle gesture, and then shook hands with Van Doorne.

Just then Lem came in with his sister following him as a satellite its leading star, for her big brother had purchased most wonderful and extravagant things; first a pair of kid gloves for mother, which that good woman changed at the store for two pairs of woolen ones, one for father and one for sister; then an enormous silk ribbon of an ancient vintage for sis's hair; and finally a big jar of fine cut and a new pipe for father. While this open-handed generosity outraged the feelings of parsimonious frugality which the parents had been obliged to practice for so many years, still their hearts leaped with a new hope and pleasure.

Al was then introduced and Erickson allowed that he knew his folks, having become acquainted at one of the Lodge meetings of the local Grange. Since the farmer had to go twelve miles in the same direction, he invited the laborer to ride that distance with him.

"There is hay in the bottom of the spring wagon," he added, "We have to put that in during the winter to keep our feet warm. The three of us sit in the front seat, and you may spread your blankets on the hay and take a rest before you get out to walk the other eight miles, but I'm afraid you can't sleep much, for the road is rough." Then with a sly smile: "No wonder, we elected a Democrat for road supervisor."

The party adjourned. Lem proposed that they all drive over together to the corrals in the spring wagon, to which suggestion the farmer assented. The three late musketeers of the cattle cars let

down the tail board of the wagon and sat at the end, allowing their feet to swing outside, while father, mother and sister occupied the seat in front.

"Would you please stop at the station, Mr. Erickson?" shouted Van Doorne above the rattle of the wagon on the hard, frozen ground. When his wish had been complied with, he entered the overheated, stuffy railroad office.

"Freight train reported yet?" he asked.

"Yep, from Maxwell," answered the ticket-agent, telegraph operator, station master and train dispatcher, all in one.

"How long before it will be here?"

"About half an hour."

"Have such a thing as a switching engine or snatch team around here to shunt the cars?"

"Nope, but if you call at the pumping station, the engineer there will give you a couple of shunting bars. Know how to handle 'em?"

"Oh, I guess so," answered the cowman. "I generally take them fried, once turned over, for breakfast. Ever try them that way?" and with a grin he left the scandalized agent to his Morse-key and wintry reflections.

They soon were at the corrals where they found the constable on the job. The cars were cleaned and bedded with fresh straw. Hay had been put out for the animals, the watering troughs had been filled, the supplies were aboard, checked up and stored away in the bull cabin.

Van Doorne was satisfied. Picking out the lightest of the extra assistants, he ordered him on top of the first car to handle the brake wheel, and then showed the other two how, by inserting the shunting bars between the steel rail and the flange of the wheels, and giving the bar a slight, upward pull, the cars were easily moved.

In a few moments the first car was in front of the chute, the lip lowered and Al and the ranchman each led a bull up the incline and into the car, where the animal was securely tied to the side bars, the rope being fastened with a swivel snap to the ring on top of the nose strap, then run loosely through the nose ring. They picked out the gentler ones first, taking good care to keep the friendly bulls together, and finally brought in the ones which had proved to be surly and ill-tempered. Brigham and Mohammed brought up the rear.

When a long drawn-out whistle announced the approach of the freight train which was to take the cars to the West, everything was in readiness, the doors locked and the extra men paid off.

Van Doorne went to the caboose to interview his new conductor, and after a short parley, it was agreed to place the three cars at the end of the train immediately in front of the caboose. Time for leave-taking was now at hand. He shook hands with Al and wished him good luck, and asked him if he would do him a parting favor, to which the worker gladly agreed.

"All right, old man, then take this and put it in little Mary's stocking at Christmas. Tell her that

it comes from one of her uncle's friends in California." Al pocketed the small gold piece, grumbling and growling, but his eyes were grateful.

Van Doorne then shook hands with sister and Nils Erickson, and finally turned to the little mother. To the amazement of the dumbfounded cattleman, she pulled his head down to the level of hers, and gave him a resounding smack on his blushing face.

The cars were switched in place, the conductor shouted "all aboard," the newly-found friends, including the constable, waved goodbye and the train pulled away towards the Golden West.

Both men in the bull cabin were quiet, inclined to meditation and reflection, both averse to conversation.

2.

The Erickson family carriage was moving at a good clip southward. Mother's eyes were suspiciously red; sister was thinking of exotic hair ribbons and leather gun holsters; Nils was mournful and melancholy once more; and Al was left to his own thoughts and devices in the bottom of the spring wagon, using the hay as a bed, his blanket roll as a pillow.

Two or three times mother glanced at the silent figure beside her. Finally she said timidly:

"Father, we do want our boy to become a good citizen and not be a quitter, don't we?"

"That's right, mother," said Nils, and added wistfully: "It was awful nice of you to prefer to stay

with me this spring instead of going on that vacation. God knows you've deserved one these many years. Life ain't been too easy for you. You shouldn't always stay home with me."

And mother looked very small and very dear when she slipped her hand over the huge glove which encased the left hand of her husband, and then she shyly in her quaint, broken way:

"Yes, father, ever!"

CHAPTER XVIII
Early Railroad Accidents

1.

THE day passed without unusual happenings. Van Doorne and Lem made themselves comfortable in the "bull cabin." By placing a liberal layer of straw on the floor and by building up the bales on three sides, they managed to keep off the biting wind, receiving plenty of fresh air and light from the grated door to the leeward.

Time passed in reading, watching the passing landscape and occasional short conversations. They supped shortly after dark on supplies from the grub chest, unrolled their blankets and were soon asleep.

They awoke at the coldest moment of the day, when the rising sun was just shooting its slanting rays over the landscape. "Slicking up" as best he could, Van Doorne climbed through the trap door and negotiated the short distance to the caboose, opened the door and entered with a cheery "Good morning, fellows." But there was mighty little cheer amongst the men; gloom and weariness seemed to be presiding.

"Why are you folks so sore this morning?" asked the cowman.

The brakeman, who was poking viciously at the red hot coals in the stove, stuck out a pugnacious chin and blurted out:

"Reasons enough, by God. How would you feel if your bunky was laying with a cracked arm and shoulder in the express car, bleeding to death with every shock of this blooming train?"

The conductor, occupied with his files and train orders at a little desk, swung around:

"Easy there, Jim, easy. This man does not know what happened. I guess he slept through it all. Well, pardner, Chris, the other brakeman, made a slight miscalculation during the night, uncoupling the train. There was no doctor within thirty miles of that dump, so the expressman gave him his berth, we rolled him in a blanket, and at the next stop he will get medical attention."

Van Doorne, who had seen many an accident on the range, and who knew what it meant to be thrown from a horse and lay with a broken leg for several hours on the prairie before being found, whistled softly:

"Delirious?"

"Nope," answered the conductor. "I fixed that. I always carry a dope outfit with me, and as soon as I could get at him, I gave him a shot. He is stupefied now, but it is hard to keep the makeshift bandage in place, and as the arm is crushed high up, a turn-twist isn't much use."

"Poor devil," said Van Doorne. "I hope he will get damages."

The brakeman laughed rancorously. "Yes, the hell he will. Say, the company is not goin' to lose one cent—they'll make money out of this little accident."

"Make money," said the ranchman puzzled. "How do you figure that?"

The railroad man had a sardonic grin on his face.

"Easy as shooting apples, mister. When my bunkey comes to the hospital, he'll find a soft-speakin', white-livered gent at his bedside, who'll feel terribly sorry for Chris. He'll be pained to have to suggest that there was a great deal of this here contributory negligence on Chris's part, 'cause if he hadn't put his arm exactly at the fatal spot, this 'deplorable' tragedy wouldn't have happened, see. Of course that'll impress Chris a lot, especially as he's got a wife and a couple of kids at home, and they gotta eat.

"Christ knows the guy has to save his own job, of course, and mebbe he'll feel sorry for him, like a clean man would feel sorry for a mangy hound. Besides he'll know if he don't give in, he don't even get a job as flagman at a crossing, and he ain't got no cash to get a lawyer and sue the company. So Chris, he'll sign the document with his left hand and pretty soon he'll be waving a red flag at some damn crossing—you wait an' see."

"But where does the company make money?" Van Doorne was still in doubt.

"Say, mister, you're green and easy. Healthy men demand good wages, even to act as flagmen, but

maimed guys has gotta work for any kind of wage —and lucky if they get 'em. Sometimes they don' even get a job like that for very long—sometime there's more cripples than there is jobs. The when a new peg-leg comes along, the others whos claims are outlawed anyhow are harmless, get th cold mit and are shown the gate. The compan saves the big expenses of putting in new safety de vices."

2.

Such conditions were bound to continue, Va Doorne reflected, until the men were organized i powerful brotherhoods, or until the public con science would be awakened, for anything like workman's compensation act was still a dream, an what chance did a poor devil have to collect on possible substantial judgment? The railroad com panies maintained law departments with a staff o expert lawyers, who tried a great many damag suits, becoming specialists in all the intricacies o that branch of the law. All possible delays, know to technical lawyers, were exhausted before a cas was finally called.

Should the judgment be in favor of the plaintif as it often was, juries having small patience wit fine-spun arguments, and generally could be de pended upon to do rough and ready justice, the a motion for a new trial was made, and simultan ously an appeal taken on the judgment roll. If th motion was denied, an additional appeal was file from the order denying the motion. On the ave

age it took three years before the case was finally heard in the court of last instance. If an error had been committed in one of the rulings of the judge, the judgment was reversed. Did the Appellate Court do substantial justice then and there? By no means. It sent the case back for retrial to the lower court, and the whole heart-breaking procedure with all the attendant expenses had to be gone over again. At a new trial, say four years after the accident, it was much harder to secure the witnesses and prove the case.

The claimant was in luck, if in six years he obtained a final judgment on which could be issued an execution. In the meantime his family could starve. Generally the case had died somewhere en route before that time, if the claimant himself were not dead. But if he finally collected, he got less than half of the judgment, for his lawyer, under the usual contract, deducted first all of the expenses, such as court fees, reporter's fees, witness fees, appeal fees, printing expenses for transcripts and briefs. Only a very small part of these expenses was recoverable as legal costs. They often ran into hundreds and sometimes thousands of dollars, and the lawyer was obliged to advance all of these expenses on a gamble, for his client, as a matter of course, did not have the wherewithal. Few experienced lawyers were willing to take such cases, for they knew only too well that in the long run they would come out heavy losers, as too many cases were reversed on mere technicalities.

Justice delayed was always justice denied, and the doctrine of contributory negligence became a stench in the nostrils of the bar. Workers, entirely ignorant of the modes of administering justice, cried to heavens for vengeance when caught in a legal jam and became bitter enemies of the existing conditions.

3.

The fight of the railroad lobbies in Congress against the law enforcing the installation of coupling safety devices was still more sinister. Cars, instead of being coupled automatically by levers attached to the sides, had to be coupled by hand. Many a trainman was caught between two bumpers, his head crushed like an eggshell, his brains spattered over the adjoining cars. Many a person, now grown to man's and woman's estate in the West, was thus made fatherless, and many a gray-haired widow can testify today that she blames her widow's weeds to such a tragedy.

It was during this period that men in the railroad construction camps were treated with cruelty, bordering on ferocity. The winged words of a camp foreman, who saw a team of mules and a driver bog down, "say, there, save them mules, they cost the boss one hundred and fifty dollars a head, never mind the stiff, I hire the likes of him for a dollar a day," was considered rather good humor by the contractors in those days, though this humorous gentleman woke one morning with a knife deservedly planted between his shoulder blades.

Such conditions prevailed before the cry of politi-
al liberty had sounded in the West, before the
logan "put the railroads out of politics" had been
arried out.

Were the railroad officials of that time inherently
ad citizens and pirates in the industrial and politi-
al field? By no means. Pioneering in a new, un-
amed country always calls for crude and vigorous
nethods. These managers had rather robust no-
ions about their own particular importance in the
eneral scheme of things; they were experts in ob-
aining grants for large tracts of public lands, and
hey had very vigorous ideas on what they believed
he people of the United States owed to them in
eturn for their efforts along empire-building lines.

Against all the conceived ideas of corporation
ood faith, they had no scruples in organizing pri-
ate companies, which picked the richest plums
rom the railroad trees, leaving the general stock-
olders to hold both the stock and the bag. As to
olitics—they were well nigh forced into it.

Lawyers, doctors and candlestick makers, who
ound practicing politics more remunerative than
racticing law, or medicine or making candles, and
who succeeded in being elected to legislatures and
ther law-dispensing bodies, soon noticed the un-
oly profits that these railroad insiders were mak-
ng. They introduced a series of cinch bills, for the
ole purpose of being bought off at the proper psy-
hological moment, meanwhile indulging in the
randstand play as watchdogs of the treasury and
uardians of the public weal.

As first the western railroads fought these politi
cal harpies by maintaining well-organized lobbies
If successful, the lobbyists realized that presently
there would be no further use for their services an
such a catastrophe had to be evaded. Therefor
they instigated the introduction of new cinch bill
and promptly fought their own measures tooth an
nail, thereby justifying their well-paid positions an
continuing to draw fat salaries and allowances.

At last the railroad managers awoke to the situa
tion. They organized a regular western, politica
bureau, at the head of which they placed a lawye
personally honest, but known to hold rather peculia
ideas of good citizenship.

This bureau, by dispensing jobs to relatives, rail
road passes, lawyer retainers, local doctor employ
ments as contract surgeons, campaign contribution
etc., soon became a potential political factor, en
abling the companies to elect their own henchme
to the legislative halls, to place their own merce
naries in the executive chairs, thereby discouragin
the further introduction of cinch bills. Incidentall
they obtained many advantages, such as low asses
ments for the tax levies, the use of municipal polic
forces during strikes of employees, favorable de
cisions of judges on debatable points, active co
operation of district attorneys' offices before court
and Grand Juries, and so forth.

4.

The Railroad Commission of California was or
of the most sinister jokes played on the people of

overeign State. In theory its members were elected by the people," but in fact they were hosen by the chief of the political bureau which he Southern Pacific Railroad Company maintained. His rule was absolute. Nomination to the commissionership was a political reward, granted for faithful services to the railroad, whose action the Board was presumed to control!

The present public utility commission, which still goes by the old name, is quite a different matter. Its members are appointed by the Governor, and the commission, known for its efficiency and honesty, has the respect and confidence of the people.

Formerly in the ante-chamber of the chief—this political Czar—United States Senators and Congressmen, Mayors and Governers-to-be or being, cooled their heels until called into the "presence." And the wooden commissioned officers of the electorate would inquire with bated breath:

"How does the old man feel today?" or "have you seen the Big Chief already?"

What chance did the trainmen have in a fight to prevent their heads from being flattened between the freight car bumpers? And the cripples, stationed at railroad crossings to wave a red flag as a danger signal, would they not eventually wave the red flag of industrial rebellion?

5.

. . . . but the engineer blew a warning whistle as the train approached the station. Every-day life

again made its usual demands on the attention of all the men.

At the station the local railroad contract surgeon and two helpers carrying a stretcher were in attendance. With tender care the half-conscious brakeman was lifted by his fellow workers from his bed of pain in the express car to the stretcher, and then lowered down to the station platform. The small local hospital was nearby, so the services of an ambulance were not required, and the little procession went its way to the low, white building, where a white-capped nurse stood waiting on the front porch.

Here poor Chris, the $85 a month brakeman, would fight a battle for his life, as he had fought the good battle for his employers, against tramps and hobos, against storms and accidents. Later he would be transferred to the division base hospital, to have a chance to recuperate. There he would have to fight an even more heroic battle, against despair and despondency, when he realized that he was a crippled, broken man for life, and that he and his dear ones would soon have to eat crumbs of charity, dropped from the employer's table.

But again the whistle blew and the train was soon under way. A new brakeman with curly hair, but a set mouth, took Chris' place. It would be several days before that mouth would relax into a smile, before the grim fate which had overtaken Chris and which threatened all of them, would be temporarily forgotten.

CHAPTER XIX
The Samaritan Pie Shooter

1.

EVER since the overland freight had left Julesburg, the number of tramps and hobos infesting the railroad right-of-way had increased. The West, in common with the balance of the country, was wallowing in the breakers of a great industrial crisis, and the Knights of the Road were bound to reach California where the trouble was least serious.

That many of them would not find work there was the least of their trouble; they would enjoy a much milder climate, after the Sierra Nevada mountains were once safely crossed, and easier tramping conditions. The large ranches of California still proffered a qualified, open hospitality, which frowned on sending a hungry man away without giving him at least a "hand-out."

As the train reached a higher elevation, the cold grew more severe, and the weary wanderers became more determined. At Laramie, several hundred had pitched camp and effectively stormed the train, sweeping aside the crews and the peace officers. The latter hesitated to use their firearms, knowing that desperate men stop at nothing. In a rush they might kill some of the hobos, but in the

end they knew they would surely be overwhelmed and torn to pieces. So they felt a pressing need to attend to business elsewhere, and the train crews compromised on the situation by allowing the men to ride, provided they did not break into the closed cars.

In addition to the unwelcome human cargo which the train now carried, the bovine aristocrats in the cattle cars began to show restlessness. At first Van Doorne ascribed it to the tunnels, and the attending roar and darkness frightening the animals. He hung a lighted lantern to the ceiling of each car and this seemed to ease the situation. At Cheyenne an elevation of six thousand feet was reached and the animals were breathing with some difficulty; the more rarified air of the high Rockies had a marked influence on the overfed bulls of the low plains. Their breath became shorter, their noses quite hot; their eyes bloodshot; and they required a great deal more drinking water than before.

The two men also began to show the strain. In each tunnel their open bull cabin was filled with foul air and smoke; showers of coal cinders descended upon them and before long they looked like the most disreputable tramps on the train.

Van Doorne now wore a dirty blue jumper, a pair of overalls and the heavy brogans. Lem was similarly dressed. Dirty and battered hats covered the unkempt hair of both men. Their skin, their clothing and even the food which they ate had taken on the odor of the bulls and of the coal damp of the

tunnels, so that when the train finally arrived about eight o'clock at Ogden, one cold December night, the two men sitting on top of the cattle car were as hard a looking pair as ever invaded a railroad yard.

2.

Breaking up the freight train and making up the new one which would also carry the cattle cars around the Salt Lake, over the Sierras and to the Coast, required a great deal of switching and shunting, so they finally found themselves on a side track a few hundred feet from the station, alongside a private railroad car. Indifferently and dully they surveyed the gloomy scenery. Suddenly all the lights were switched on in the private car, disclosing a dining room, appointed in the barbaric luxury of Pullman styles then in vogue. The center was occupied by a table laid for six persons, covered with cut glass and silver and graced by orchids.

A few moments afterwards a company of three ladies and three gentlemen entered, all in evening clothes. One of the latter the ranchman recognized as a member of a club, in which he held an out-of-town membership, another, from his often published pictures in the newspapers, as one of the railroad magnates of the transcontinental railroad. The white-clad steward seated the party and almost immediately a well-groomed negro waiter brought in the cocktails and the dinner proceeded.

Van Doorne looked at Lem. "Would like to smash that window with a rock, wouldn't you?"

The youth reddened.

"Well," continued Van Doorne, "so would I, but from a different motive. You see, I think that the railroad magnate is a good deal of an idiot. The stupidity of displaying luxury in a railroad yard filled with half hungry, half angry men—a vulgar ostentation like that stirs up trouble, and our fat, self-satisfied friend there, who by the way is just murdering a most excellent mutton chop, should know better.

"But your motive, Lem, is quite different. You feel like smashing something because you are hungry and dirty, and that fancy bunch is clean and well fed. Well, sonny, that feeling is natural, but this is a democracy in which everyone has his chance, even if he is an immigrant or the son of one. Some fellows have a darned sight better chance than others, but that can't be helped. We are going through the greatest experiment in democracy that the world has ever known and our system is, after all, the best one that human ingenuity has been able to conceive. Therefore, old man, when you feel like smashing windows, forget it, and try instead to figure out a way to improve yourself, so that when you are as old as that corn-fed party, you can sit in a car like that yourself—if you care for that kind of thing.

"I'm going over to the station to send some telegrams, and see if I can locate a beanery. We are going to be on this track for about an hour and I shall come back to relieve you and give the directions for the eats as soon as possible."

3.

Van Doorne, after crossing the maze of rails, landed on the station platform and entered the now almost deserted station building. He was stiff and sore. Arriving at the small window which served both as a wicket for the ticket seller and for the taking of telegrams, he saw a flashily dressed young man, striking a pose against a table, on which were the telegraph instruments. He was softly humming an opera air.

"A young substitute, I guess," surmised the cowman. "I bet the old, hard-boiled operator is off duty."

The exquisite one languidly lifted his eyes, but did not move; why should he stop in the middle of his musical practice to ascertain what a tramp wanted?

But in the midst of a trill, he was cut short by the person, who by all the preconceived ideas of propriety, should be respectful towards one of his betters.

"Hey, there, you sweet maverick, quit your yodelling and canter over here, pronto, will you? If you don't, I'll go upstairs and report you to the assistant supe. I bet you twenty dollars he will skin you alive and hang your lovely hide on that chandelier to dry. You savvy the burro?"

The arbiter elegantia came at once to the wicket, asking: "What may I do for you, sir?"

"Send these two telegrams collect, one to my ranch headquarters and one to the Golden Eagle

Hotel at Sacramento. I'll be there in a couple of days and if there has been anything funny with these messages, I shall come back in this direction just to have a friendly talk with you. Savvy?"

The two telegrams having been filed, one ordering two experienced vaqueros to meet the train at Sacramento to take charge of the bulls at that point, the other to reserve a room and bath at the hotel, Van Doorne turned around to find a grinning, grizzled engineer standing behind him.

The ranchman smiled back and inquired if there were somewhere in the neighborhood an eating place where a man could obtain a square meal at that time of night. The veteran hesitated for a moment and then replied:

"The station restaurant is closed, but if you go out in front of this building, turn to the left and keep going for about three hundred feet, you will come to the eating house of the railroad men. Occasionally they will feed an outsider, too, and say, young fellow, try to get a seat at the counter so that Mary O'Lane will feed you. She is just peaches and cream, and as good as she is pretty, and say, some pie-shooter, too!" With a sunny smile on his windburned, gray-bearded face, the veteran of the road moved out of the station towards his little home.

4.

Our friend did as bidden, soon reached the door of a low brick building, where the sound of clattering dishes mixed with the humming of voices. He

pushed the door open and entered a large, low-ceilinged room, in the center of which was a horseshoe-shaped counter. Inside the horseshoe two waitresses were busy handing out cups of steaming coffee and dishes filled with plain, substantial food to an assortment of railroad men, who ate with the jingling noises and large gestures of thoroughly hungry men, who had never heard of the usages of polite society and who cared less. It was not difficult to locate "Peaches and Cream," for she bloomed like a full flower in this stubble field of men and dishes.

The cowman felt queer and dizzy, for coming out of the cold night, hungry and tired, the heat of the room, the atmosphere of which was surcharged with an odor of cooked food and the steam of wet clothing, staggered him. He slouched down on the nearest stool, perched against the counter and gripped its top with both hands. The room reeled before his eyes, but soon the spell passed, and he heard a sweet voice, full of compassion:

"You poor fellow, I understand, broke and almost starved. Never mind, partner, I'll give you something to eat. Don't say a word" . . . . for Van Doorne had started to protest, "lying is bad for the soul, as the good priest used to tell us in old Ireland. Just a moment."

A large plate of pork and beans, steaming hot, appeared suddenly before him, followed by a big cup of coffee with two doughnuts and a plate of bread. After this "Peaches and Cream" seemed to

forget the wayfarer and turned to pay attention to the other customers.

Amongst time-scarred engineers, powerful shouldered firemen, broad-jawed brakemen and indifferent looking oilers and wheel testers, a young fellow with curly blond hair, addressed as "Mickey," seemed to be the general favorite and to hold that rank especially in the eyes of Mary. Once in a while she stole a knowing smile in his direction and then his honest face lit up in pleasure.

Just as Van Doorne had finished his food, a large piece of apple pie, the quarter of a big one standing on a near tray, came sailing on a tin plate over the counter and stopped in front of him.

So that is how she gets the name of "pie-shooter," thought the cattleman, as he attacked the new dainty.

Mary, seeing that her services were not needed elsewhere, came over to where the ranchman was feasting and examined with a motherly eye that seedy-looking individual. While speaking with him, she glanced now and then at Mickey, a by-play not lost on her listener.

"Steady of yours?" asked Van Doorne, indicating the curly-haired one.

"You bet," said Mary O'Lane, proudly. "Mickey and me have been keeping company for the last two years. We're both working and saving. Next April we are going to hit it off together, when we have enough money to pay for some furniture and make a

payment on the little cottage that we have been looking at."

She warmed to the subject. "We are going to have a regular love nest, awaiting the grace of the Saints," and then suddenly blushing at the thought of possibly embarrassing the subject of her intended charity, she added:

"Of course, we have been saving for quite a while, and we always have something for a fellow who needs it worse than us." She dropped her voice to a low whisper, as if she were making a tremendous confession, as indeed she did: "My brother, John, struck the road himself a few months ago. Mother is worried to death. The scamp! But I am praying every night to the Saints that he will find someone who will stake him for a meal if he needs it badly."

Then becoming suddenly businesslike, she looked over the empty dishes in front of her:

"Let's see, pork and beans, coffee and doughnuts and pie . . . . 38c."

And before Van Doore could make a move she slipped her own meal card from her apron pocket, took the little shining instrument which was suspended from a ribbon around her slim waist, and properly punched the amount on the card. Again she smiled toward Mickey, who nodded his head understandingly.

The cowman watched her in wonder and then a light dawned. By all that is holy, he thought, that poor Irish kid, who is working and saving for a

home so she can marry Mickey, has been my hostess, thinking that I was dead broke.

Slowly he got up, opened the dirty jumper, revealing one of the much-abused silk shirts, produced his buckskin money bag, picked out a new, shining twenty-dollar gold piece, laid it on the table and said quietly:

"Good night, Mary, this is for the little darling the Saints may send you," and he walked towards the door without turning his head, even when a cry "Sakes alive!" accompanied by a clatter of falling tin pie plates, announced the fact that "Peaches and Cream" had also seen a light.

CHAPTER XX
On the Home Stretch

1.

OUTSIDE it was bitter cold, but Van Doorne did not notice it. A warm glow of happiness tingled through him. How good life was and how many fine people dwelt on this earth! He broke into a rollicking cowboy song that the riders attached to his headquarters sarcastically indulged in, when passing the Italian vegetable growers' colony at Badger Flat, and which immortalized a certain Mr. Sebastian Knight, one of his two-fisted rent collectors:

"My name is Louis Pe . . . . rie
I live in the Co . . . . lo . . . . nie,
Me no likee to fight
Who? Mister Knight!

"We raisee the vegetables,
We eatee the banaan,
Sometimes he give us hell,
Who? Mr. S'bastiaan!"

Still singing he reached his own stock cars and hailed his assistant:

"Lem, you will find a hash house about three hundred feet east of the station. The railroad men

get fed there, but you walk right in and they will feed you, too. And say, I found out the custom in that blooming place. As soon as you sit down you must put this here half dollar in front of you on the counter,—otherwise they may kick you out!" And with a laugh he handed his "sidekicker" the coin.

"Thanks, boss, I guess the eats must be grand and glorious in that joint, for you certainly look happy."

Van Doorne's face grew rather wistful: "Sure thing, Lem, I am happy. Why, I had the happiest meal of my life in that place. You see, I had supper with the Saints!"

2.

It was eleven o'clock at night before the freight train No. 9 finally pulled out of Ogden and began to round Salt Lake. A new complication had set in. Lem, who had evidently eaten his warm food too hurriedly became dreadfully car sick. Except for his short escape to and in Chicago, he had always lived a regular life on his father's farm, his good mother looking after his creature wants, so the mode of living of the last eleven days began to tell on him.

The youth needed rest more than anything else and was ordered to take off his shoes and turn in. Before long, warm and comfortable in his blankets, he was relieved of his nausea, the attending fever abated and he slept soundly.

Twenty-four hours later they reached Summit, at an altitude of nearly seven thousand feet in the Sierra Nevadas. The spirits of the two men now ran high. Van Doorne was like a boy out of school, and Lem, much refreshed, was full of interest and curiosity. The many sharp curves, around which the train sped, fully occupied the attention of the bulls.

It was brilliant moonlight, and snow sparkled on the great pine trees. The air was like champagne. The descent towards the great Sacramento Valley began. The men turned in and slept fitfully their last night in the cars. As they were passing Dutch Flat, the famous location of the placer goldfields of '49, in the foothills of the western slope of the Sierras, they got up and shaking themselves, climbed to the top of the car to survey the magnificent landscape spread before them. The temperature had become milder and rose continually, as the train descended towards the valley. Slowly the sun climbed in the skies. The hills opened up and a glorious view of the Sacramento Valley lay ahead of them. The valley looked like a magnificent checkered field, the river crossing it as a great green ribbon.

"This is California, Lem." The cowman almost shouted in his glee at coming home again. "No snow, no ice in these valleys, I'll tell you. The big green patches you see there are the alfalfa fields, now producing their last year's crop, which is too short for harvesting and is therefore pastured down. The brown spots are the peach and almond orchards,

now leafless, but in a few months they will be a sea of pink and white blossoms.

"What you see is the land of promise, Lem, the land flowing with milk and honey. To be a citizen of such a State is a privilege and an honor. Especially one of foreign birth must be prepared to give back to the State as much and more if possible than the State gives him."

Realizing that his enthusiasm in describing the benefits of the glorious West in general and California in particular had caused him to go perhaps too far, and that he had conjured before Lem's inexperienced eyes a picture of too easy plenty, he added with a grin:

"Milk and honey all right, son, it's all there, but you have to work hard to decorate any of the cows and bees with your own special brand, and that is no joke!"

Now came the reaction. Van Doorne, realizing that his work was about finished, and that the responsibility would soon end, felt a great lassitude. The last part of the journey was completed in silence, and when finally the blowing of the whistles and the tolling of great engine bells announced the arrival of the train at the Sacramento freight yards the ranchman heaved a sigh of relief. Soon two bronzed figures ran up to the car, prodpoles in hand, waving a welcome.

3.

A stately old Mexican of Spanish descent, the major domo, head of the vaqueros of headquarters

had come personally to greet and relieve his chief. After the exchange of the usual greetings and after old Antonia Lopez had given an approving look at the new toros, the man informed Van Doorne that a cab was standing nearby to take him to the hotel. He chided the younger man affectionately for not having ordered his men to come to Ogden or Cheyenne to meet him, and then instructed his vaquero to transfer the superintendent's bags to the waiting vehicle. He shook hands with Lem, assured him that he would be at headquarters before dark, and pocketing the railroad documents which had been handed to him, quietly and effectively took charge of the shipment.

Van Doorne crossed the railroad yards and found the cab, gave an order to drive to the Golden Eagle Hotel and sank back into the seat. Great heavens, he was tired, in fact, he didn't remember ever having been quite so exhausted, except perhaps when he had led his men, backfiring against a great stubble fire which swept the plains, threatening to destroy several farm houses. That had lasted only a day, however, and this time he had been under a strain for fully twelve days.

When he reached the hotel he tipped the cabman in the liberal way that cattlemen had in those days, and passing a dumbfounded bell hop, who was gingerly taking out the bags, walked into the hotel.

James Dunnigan, the genial "greeter" behind the desk, took one look at the soiled figure in dirty jumper and overalls entering the swinging doors, and shook his head:

"Sorry, my friend, this hotel is full up. If you turn around the corner and walk two blocks toward the river you will find a good lodging house. Here, porter, show him the way!"

Van Doorne pulled off his battered, dilapidated hat, wiped his face with the bandanna knotted loosely about his neck and grinned at the hotel clerk:

"Whoa, Jimmy, you're riding the wrong cayuse. Is my room ready?"

Mr. Dunnigan rose to the occasion at once. "Front," he shouted, "front," and when the bellboy arrived, "Take Mr. Van Doorne's baggage to room 37 and hump yourself. Anything else I may do for you, Mr. Van Doorne—always gladly at your service, you know."

"Yes," was the rejoinder. "Send up the valet and the barber, but have them hurry, for if they wait five minutes they will find me asleep," and turning on his heel he followed the bellhop to his room.

Mr. Dunnigan was as good as his word, for the bellboy had hardly finished his worthless rites of opening and shutting windows, pointing out the bathroom door, switching the electric lights on and off, and finally pocketing the tip, when a knock at the door announced the arrival of the general factotum, known as the chamber valet.

Van Doorne greeted the little Englishman with easy friendliness.

"Hello, William, glad to see you. Turn on the water in the bathtub, good and hot, will you? Then

unpack those bags and lay out some clean clothing. Take this dirty jumper and the overalls and burn them, and send the other stuff to the laundry. My suits I suppose you can clean and press yourself."

The man did as he was told. In a few minutes the warm bath was ready and after dropping his soiled clothing on the floor, Van Doorne slipped into the tub with a big sigh of relief, and began the task of scrubbing off the travel stains. Thrice he renewed the water, feeling more relaxed each time. Meanwhile the barber had entered and asked what he could do.

He received the cheerful reply to "make it a shave, shampoo and anything else you think of—about two dollars' worth, and do it while I'm soaking out."

The man took a scandalized look at the two weeks' old stubble, picked out his strongest blade, prepared the lather and went to work, and while he was busy, Van Doorne fell asleep.

4.

It was fully twenty-four hours afterwards when he awakened. First he thought he was still in the bull cabin, but the feel of clean linen sheets soon made him realize his mistake. Slowly consciousness returned, his mind cleared somewhat and he partially opened his eyes. He became aware that he was lying in a hotel room and that two strangers were whispering together at the foot of the bed. He wondered where he had seen that female figure be-

fore. He decided it was the nurse who had stood on the porch of the little hospital, way back across the mountains, awaiting the bruised body of poor Chris, the brakeman. But how did she get here? And that other party, sporting a gray Van Dyke beard, looked like a doctor.

He closed his eyes again, much too deliciously relaxed to want even to wonder what it was all about. But gradually the low-spoken words began to register on his understanding. The doctor and nurse were conferring.

"Did he sleep all the time?"

"Yes, he surely did."

"Restfully?"

"Like a log, during the first six hours when I had charge. The last few hours, however, he has been muttering a blue streak."

"Overtired brain becoming active again. He'll come out all right. As soon as he awakens, take his temperature, and if he has any fever, give him one of these powders."

He was about to take his leave when he noticed that the eyes of the young nurse held unspoken questions.

"Anything else?" he asked kindly, for he knew that this nurse was young and often troubled by the actions of her patients.

The girl put a familiar hand on the arm of her old friend, who had officiated at her birth and who had closed the eyes of her mother. She dropped her professional mien:

"Say, Uncle Denny," she said, "that man called me names in his sleep."

"He did? Well, such things happen. What did he say?"

"He called me 'Peaches and Cream,'" and she added, blushing, "also little mother Mary."

The doctor looked at her with understanding in his tired old eyes and remarked dryly:

"Did he say anything more?"

"Not much, Uncle Denny, but tell me, what do men mean when they call a girl a saint and a . . . . pie-shooter?"

CHAPTER XXI
The Ex-Patriate From Mexico

1.

THE next morning Van Doorne woke up slowly. He had a dim feeling that he was still in a comfortable bed, but his semi-consciousness battled with reality. One moment his rational mind arose above the threshold of benumbed mental processes, then fact and fancy were mixed.

The feeling of resting between clean sheets and warm blankets departed once more and he was in the cattle car, bumping and shaking on his way to the West. And by Jove! That must be reality, for he smelled a faint, undeniable odor of cattle, and he most certainly felt himself shaken.

At last, fully awake, he opened his eyes. Toralles stood before him, gently shaking him by the shoulder.

"Good morning, Mr. Douchy."

"Good morning, Martinez, but how in the world do you happen to be here?"

"Orders of Signor Carpenter," he replied.

The cowboy informed his superior that the energetic Mr. Carpenter had been at the Division Headquarters when the bulls arrived and had called them "buenos toros."

Van Doorne knew in reality that it was not Mr. Carpenter's nature to approve openly of the purchases. If pleased he would at best have refrained from making any remark at all. If he had detected any flaw, he would have expressed certain displeasure and energetic disapproval to Antonio Lopez, leaving no one within earshot in doubt. Apparently there had been a lack of comment, and this had been promptly translated by the astute Mexican-Spanish cowman into a taciturn approval, which he had duly communicated to his followers.

Toralles, devoted to his young manager, had welcomed the order from Lopez to go to Sacramento and report at the hotel. Anyone suggesting that he had been sent to "valet" his boss, would have had a fight on his hands, but to escort his superior home, that was different!

2.

Martinez was a character, whose story may just as well be told here:

He had killed his man. Those who heard him tell the story never felt any doubt about it. Had he been a northern brave instead of a half-breed Yaqui Indian, he might have sported a notch on his gun, carrying additional conviction to the very few individuals to whom he had stated the facts. To say that he had made a confession of the crime of murder would do Senor Toralles a grave injustice. A confession presupposes sorrow and regret, if not remorse, but our Mexican friend did not labor under such conscientious disadvantages. He was at per-

fect peace with God, if not with the world,—the world being represented by sundry, energetic rurales of the land of Toralles and . . . . Porfirio Diaz.

Besides a crime is usually defined as a wrongful, depraved act, wilfully committed, an aggravated, immoral transgression as it were, and Martinez would have denied with righteous indignation any delinquency or depravity on his part. According to his viewpoint, killing, under certain circumstances, was not only justifiable, but meritorious. One might as well call the judge on the bench, who pronounces the death sentence, or the executioner who carries the judgment of the law into effect, a murderer, as to give that designation to a man who took the administration of simple justice—the only justice he knew—into his own hands. Do not the Germans call the hangman "der nachrichter" (the last judge), and did not the sturdy Hollanders indicate that accursed one as "de scherprechter" (the keen-blade judge)?

According to his own lights and standards, Martinez had been the first and last judge. Like all men of the open, he was taciturn. Uncommunicative as to his own affairs and reserved as to speech, he was often mute for hours at a time and only became talkative sitting in the evening around the campfire. Then by drawing on his imagination, he would endeavor to outlie, in a most fantastic and impersonal way, any of the other cowmen, for the honor of his own particular outfit and the edification of his mates. It was just because of his reticence

that those few in whom he had confided, believed him without a question. Besides, what fool admits himself a killer, if he is not one?

But the poison of doubt had entered his simple soul. It was brought about by a few short syllables, which a fellow Mexican had let drop one day during a long ride. This gentleman of the chaparraros had likewise drifted north to California ranches and had stopped one night at a mesquit ranchero, where a young woman was nursing a man back to life, a man who had been stabbed . . . . almost to death. Though the description was vague, there was enough of it to give Toralles serious misgivings. Not that he feared vengeance at the hand of his intended victim. Far from it; he would have wished for another combat in order to settle the matter once and for all, but while a gentler soul would have been relieved to know that he had escaped the fate of being a killer, the fierce soul of the Mexican was of quite a different texture and failure put him "out of face" with his own unsophisticated world.

It was out of the question to return to the place and make sure that his victim was safely under ground, for President Diaz and his minions had a most unpleasant way of disposing of too energetic fellow citizens, by placing them at sunrise against an adobe wall. Martinez had not the least desire to let his heart's blood decorate the blind side of a humble building.

After all, the ill fortune of being a failure might not be his anyhow, and it was more desirable to be

a very much alive failure on the pleasant plains and valleys of California than a dead success on the sun-baked fields of his native State. As no one knew of the distress which sometimes tormented him, he put the surmised disappointment from him and continued to tell the same simple story, but now only when strictly necessary.

3.

On a certain hot afternoon, Hendrik Van Doorne sat at the desk in his office at headquarters. Before him lay Pomeroy, on waterrights. He was studying the chapters dealing with a prescriptive water-right as against a riparian owner, and he was puzzled somewhat how an adverse use of the water could possibly be both peaceful and hostile. It was the hour of the midday siesta. Outside one could hear the drone of insects; occasionally a shout of laughter floated in through the open windows, coming from the porches of nearby bunk houses, where the ranch hands were seeking shade, during the short period between their meal and the blowing of the one o'clock whistle.

Promptly when the whistle blew he would step out in the sun in view of his men, watching them go to work under the orders of the different foremen, gang and strawbosses.

He had just found the right place in his book, where the point which intrigued him would be cleared up, when he heard the ritz rrr ritz of roweled spurs on high-heeled boots, drag over the floor of the adjoining porch. A knock came at the screened

door and with a sigh of resignation, he called "Come in."

About one hundred and fifty hands were quartered at the main ranch, divided into many groups. There was the haying gang, which kept going for eight months in the year on the irrigated alfalfa fields; the irrigation gang, the ditching and scraping gang, the shovel gang, the box and fence makers, the cattle feeders, the drivers of the big freight teams, and so on. All these men worked under their own foremen who hired and fired them without question. Then there were the blacksmiths, the men in the harness shop, the saddle shop, the wheelwrights, the dairy men and the cheese makers, who labored under their own bosses, and these in turn reported to the general yard foreman.

The vaqueros at headquarters were a set apart and worked under the orders of Antonio Lopez, the "gentleman vaquero" of the San Joaquin. Lopez was seventy years old, dark-skinned with snow white hair and heavy-pointed Van Dyke beard. His coal black eyes had lost none of their luster of youth. He sat on his horse like a centaur and had the manners of an accomplished hidalgo, as indeed he was. His forebears, like those of his assistant Francisco Marentez, had been owners of Mexican and Spanish grants, and had eventually lost their inheritances to more energetic American, German, Irish and Hebrew newcomers, whose operations had been very much facilitated by their own lack of feeling for the niceties of life and by the haughty pride and shiftless commercial methods of these descen-

dants of old Castile. They were fully aware that the sons and daughters of the men who had dispossessed them looked down upon them. In fact, these true California land gentry were called "greasers," though they in turn looked with scorn on the immigrants, whether from the eastern States or Europe, mostly shopkeepers, butchers and traders, who by sharper wits and often by a less delicate code of honor had become their successors to the fat lands of California. They referred to the intruders as "gringos" and considered it a lasting disgrace if a member of their family married one of them.

Many had become poor, indeed very poor, and it filled their cup of bitterness to overflowing to be compelled to accept employment from the "gringos" on the very ranches which had once belonged to them or to their fathers. But what was a man to do? The only trade they had was the stock business. This they knew from the ground up and so they hid their pride, and rode the ranges, once their own, for a monthly wage of twenty-five to fifty dollars and found, furnishing their own saddles and other vaquero paraphernalia.

These vaqueros were a close corporation indeed. Once in a while an outsider was admitted into the sacred circle, but only after much deliberation and hesitation. Both Lopez and Marentez were particular, for the riders were the shock troops of that large industrial-agricultural plant.

To them was entrusted the working of the cattle, including the two yearly rodeos, the selection of the steers for feeders, the picking out for market of the

"topped off" steers, the watching of the bulls, the branding and marking of the calves, the shipping of the fat stock, the shifting to different pastures, the breaking in of the mule and horse colts, etc. They were likewise the line riders, who followed the barbed wire fences for hundreds of miles and made the necessary repairs; they were the men who watched the rise of the rivers and sloughs and brought in the news to the nearest ranch house equipped with telephone service. They watched against horse and cattle thieves, against those duck and geese hunters, who invaded the lower pastures and sometimes molested the livestock. They were the emergency veterinarians on the lookout against infectious stock diseases, such as hog cholera, black leg, anthrax, Texas fever and other ills to which animal life is heir. It was they who had to carry orders from headquarters to camp and ranch foremen not within reach of telephone service, often riding all night in order to deliver the orders before sunrise, so that the foreman in charge could start the hands early; it was they who watched against the drifting of the cattle during storms, and had to patrol the range, inviting suspicious characters to take an unceremonious leave. These men constituted the nerve system of the great ranch enterprise where shipping of fat livestock from one of the five railroad stations within its boundaries was a daily occurrence.

The manager knew all his men, not only by name but their antecedents, their present wants and their hopes for the future, and before Lopez would hire

a new hand, he would send him with preliminary recommendation to the manager's office, accompanied by his lieutenant. No rider could be attached to headquarters without having been interviewed by Van Doorne.

4.

Francisco Marentez, tall, finely proportioned, with gentle manners, if not aroused, now entered the ranch office, sombrero in hand. He was followed by Martinez Toralles, who, slightly ill at ease, endeavored to adjust his eyesight to the much darker room. Silently Van Doorne motioned Marentez to sit down, keeping the stranger standing.

"Well, Francisco, what is the word?"

"This man wants a job riding, Señor Douchy."

It was too difficult for the softly-tuned Spanish tongue to pronounce correctly the harsher Dutchy.

"Does he speak English?"

The man spoke up eagerly: "Si, señor."

Van Doorne ignored the interruption:

"You know, Francisco, I do not care how much Spanish your men speak amongst themselves, that is their privilege; nor how much Italian is spoken amongst the irrigators, or Portuguese in the scrapers' camps, but any man who comes in contact with the management must speak English."

Marentez, who had evidenced some embarrassment on that score, smiled grimly and replied:

"I know, Mr. Douchy."

"Does Antonio Lopez approve of him?"

"Yes, senor, otherwise I would not have brought him to you."

"Is there any vacancy amongst the riders?"

"No, señor, not now, but in about two weeks we shall need a few extra men to take stock to the Stockton swamps, the grass is getting short, you know."

"I know," replied the manager, with a worried look. A second dry year was a very serious matter.

Toralles, a swarthy Mexican, plainly showing his Indian blood, had followed the conversation as far as his limited knowledge of English permitted. He was a man of about thirty years, short and stockily built, dressed in high-heeled boots, a shirt and pair of overalls which appeared rather small for him and his slightest movement showed the rippling of powerful muscles underneath his scanty garments.

Van Doorne thought that the man was worth investigation. "What is your name?" he asked.

Toralles negotiated that question slowly and gave his name.

"Do you speak English?"

"Si, señor."

"That will need improving. Why did you leave Sonora?"

The man showed plainly by his uneasy eyes that he had understood the question. He looked appealingly at his interlocutor, then shifted his eyes to Marentez.

The manager understood:

"I think, Francisco, that you better tell him that ve are not interested in his reasons from curiosity, ior do we belong to the police. Whatever he tells is will be confidential, whether we hire him or not. But we want the truth. If there is one thing we annot put up with, it's a liar. Tell him that in Spanish and he may give his story, if he wants to, n the same language."

Marentez translated and then both men waited or the answer, which was not long in coming.

"I left Sonora because I knifed a man."

"Why?" asked Van Doorne.

5.

The explanation followed in voluble Spanish. One afternoon he had gone home unexpectedly and had found his best friend in the cabin with his wife, r at least with the charming young woman, who ttended to his domestic needs and cultivated the mall cleared cornpatch in the rear of their domain. The thoughtless gentleman had never been given an pportunity to rise, for a knife had suddenly left ts hiding place in the right boot and had been forced etween the left collarbone and shoulder blade of he philanderer, reaching toward the heart. As to he lady in the case, he had belabored her with a lub and chased her into the prickly pear bush, al- owing her barely to escape with her life, after vhich he had saddled his horse and ridden forth.

His eyes were somber and full of scorn, as he vound up by saying:

"And I trusted him!"

It was unnecessary for Marentez to translate Van Doorne understood sufficient Mexican-Spanish to follow the story, and the man, once launched had reacted the scene with realistic gestures.

Marentez looked at his chief inquiringly.

"The man is satisfactory as far as I am concerned Francisco. There is no objection on my part if you and Antonio wish to hire him."

Marentez declared the man engaged.

"Very well," said Van Doorne, "then take him to the cook house and see that he gets something to eat, and have him turn his horse out in the pasture He can bunk in with the riders, I guess. By the way, tell the stable man to hitch up the light buggy with the two Oregon grays and have him take the broken bits out of the bridles and replace them with straight ones. Have the outfit ready within thirty minutes. I shall go over to the barn and Toralle can drive me to Tres Palos. Better have a rider at each of the two gates before we strike the twelve mile grade to open them when we come in sight—we may not have time to open them ourselves."

Marentez grinned. He knew that for some reason the manager had decided to ascertain what Toralle's mettle really was, and he also knew that the two eight-year-old Oregon grays, who had never felt a rope on them until they were six years old, were the toughest pieces of horseflesh in the whole San Joaquin Valley—all springs inside and without equine conscience.

Half an hour later as Van Doorne walked across the yard, separating the house from the stables, he was waylaid by Antonio Lopez on a magnificent bay.

"Mr. Douchy," he said, to his superior, "you are going to take the grays, no?"

"Correct, Antonio."

"You are going to the river camp?"

"Correct again."

"I have sent Duffy and Dell Rojas to the gates to open them for you. Maybe I better send one along on horseback all of the way, yes, no?"

Van Doorne was touched by the kindly thought of the old centaur. "No, thank you, Antonio, but I appreciate it just the same." And he shook hands with him.

6.

Arriving at the stables he found the grays hitched before a light, but staunch, side-bar buggy, built for rough travel. Aragonne, the Spanish-Basque stable boss, stood in front of them, talking to them and stroking their noses. A heavy canvas strap, stretched between two snubbing poles put against the sides of the center gangway, separated him from the team. Two stable boys stood at the sides, ready to slip the straps which held the horses by their bridles. Toralles sat in the vehicle holding the lines.

"Have the harnesses been inspected, Aragonne?"

"Yes, Mr. Douchy."

"Buggy been greased and nuts and bolts tightened?"

"Yes, sir."

"Very well, now you tell Toralles in Spanish which way we have to go, so if something should go wrong he cannot blame it on the long-suffering English language. Tell him we shall make straight for the gate, and after passing through, turn sharply to the left and make over the ranch road to the first gate of the little salt grass field. You can point that out to him from here. He will see a vaquero holding it open. From there he must follow the wagon trail to the second gate about a mile away, leading into the large swamp field. He will see a man on horseback there, too. Then he must strike the abandoned Santa Fe railroad grade and follow that for about twelve miles until we come to a gate across the grade. There we shall stop and open the gate, turn for six miles to the east until we strike the river camp. Tell him to hold his horses on the grade, for they will bog down if he doesn't, and when finally in the river field, he must head straight from one levee across the slough towards the next. The whole field is flooded, but only about a foot deep, except where the sloughs cut through. They are dammed and he will have to make the dams—if not, we shall land in the slough, and as the banks are steep, we shall stay there until they find us next month, when the water drains off. At the river camp, I shall give him his further orders."

Aragonne translated faithfully, and the new man nodded, indicating that he understood.

Van Doorne jumped into the seat next the driver and shouted: "Let go!"

The stable boss dropped the heavy strap in front of the team. The boys slipped the bridle straps and the two grays cleared the floor space between them and the open in one leap. With a great clatter of hoofs the team shot past the main ranch house, through the gate, and was skilfully headed to the left.

As soon as the horses saw the open road before them they took the bits between their teeth and endeavored to bolt. Toralles braced himself against the footrailing behind the dashboard, wrapped the lines around his sinewy hands and leaned back. The big muscles in his legs, arms and shoulders bulged under the strain; his neck was swollen with the effort, but he set his jaw firmly and never uttered a word. Soon the first gate was reached and passed. The team lurched on the salt grass trail towards the second gate, which was likewise left behind within a few minutes.

The Santa Fe grade stretched itself before the eyes of the men, like a long serpent in a swampy expanse of land, water and grass. Martinez headed the horses for this grade, and upon nearing the rather abrupt approach, managed to slow down somewhat. Once on top of the grade he gave the horses their heads, at the same time steadily pressing on the foot brake. The first six miles it was a battle between the animals and the man, but finally realizing that they had found their master, they slowly tapered down until a steady gait of twelve miles an hour was reached.

The driver and his passenger had not spoken a word until the last gate was approached. Then Van Doorne ordered Toralles to stop the team and he went to open the gate, instead of taking the lines and letting his vaquero do so. The subtle compliment was not lost on his swarthy companion, for when he drove through and passed the manager, he courteously bowed his head in thanks.

7.

The river camp was soon reached and Van Doorne busied himself with the engineer in charge. They became engrossed in the detail work of the camp, the feeding of the teams, building dams here and cutting ditches there, the pay roll of the men, the supplying of the cook house, and so forth.

Finally they walked over to the house wagon, which did service as office, sleeping quarters and recreation hall for the engineer and his young assistants.

"How does the river gauge read now, Mr. Werner?"

The engineer produced the chart: "Rather low for this time of year."

Van Doorne nodded: "Very low, indeed, when did you last have the flow measured?

"Yesterday, sir, with the Price meter."

"How many cubic second feet did you get?"

"About twelve hundred."

"The devil," exclaimed the manager. "If it falls much lower we are sure to have trouble with our

neighbors, unless we discontinue our work. Well, we'll see. Have you any fresh salmon in camp?"

"No, sir, but they are running fine at our temporary dam. We have constructed our fish ladders to comply with the law, and the fish are jumping quite lively. I have been so short-handed, however, that I have not been able to put a man spearing."

"Very well," answered Van Doorne. "I have a man with me who will turn the trick. Just give me one of those spears."

Walking outside, he called the new man: "Here, Martinez, take this spear and put in the rest of the day spearing salmon. You will be here for several days under the engineer's orders."

He handed the long, slim, all-steel spear to the man and walked away to inspect the livestock and the cook house. Returning about half an hour later, he saw Toralles, naked except for a loin cloth, standing in the whirling waters below the dam. The sun sparkled on the foam and showers of glittering drops fell now and then on the magnificent brown torso of the man, who held the spear poised motionless in the air. Several of the smaller salmon negotiated the system of chutes without much difficulty, climbed the fish ladders, which enabled them to rise from the whirlpool of water at the foot of the dam to the quiet pond situated in front of it, and continued their voyage to the high streams of the mountains. But the large salmon endeavored to leap over the dam, a height of six feet. Often they accomplished it, unless stopped in mid-air by a swift stroke of Toralles' spear.

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The water, melted snow from the Sierra Nevada mountains, was ice-cold about a foot below the surface, and the sun above was broiling hot, but the man stood there like a statue, never moving a muscle, unless it was to strike with deadly precision. Van Doorne watched him approvingly for several moments, and then turned on his heel.

Picking up a man suffering from malaria, whom the engineer desired to send to the hospital, he headed the grays for home, satisfied that he had found in Toralles a man who would do to be promoted to one of the confidential positions as rider at headquarters, which soon came about.

CHAPTER XXII
The Farm Clark

1.

MR. KINGMAN was the general timekeeper at headquarters. He was a Britisher with a cultivated Oxford accent and academic diction; he introduced himself to strangers as the "farm clark." In appearance he was the opposite of the man one usually visualizes as a typical son of Albion. He was short, stout for his thirty-five years, rather bald, with protruding eyes and a small, but immorally gay mustache. He was a first-class bookkeeper, and while the foreman kept the time of the men working in the crews, Mr. Kingman's duties were more important, for he kept the foremen's time, and checked over the timebooks which each foreman was required to keep with him. At stated and convenient hours daily, he was in his office, situated in a small detached bungalow, back of the manager's house. Here he had two rooms at his disposition. In the one downstairs he kept his books of account behind a solid oak railing, which divided his office in two parts, and upstairs he kept his personal belongings, part of which, rumor whispered, was under glass and carefully corked.

During the regular meal hours and for one hour after each meal Mr. Kingman stood before the desk,

busily engaged in checking up many entries and exchanging the yellow time checks made out by the foremen for more formal bank checks, which the hands could cash at the local bank, or at any of the stores in the adjacent small town of Dos Pinos.

At other times Mr. Kingman rode a decrepit sorrel and would turn up at the most unexpected and inconvenient hours at outlying ranches or camps, and ask in very polite but positive English to see the time books and to have indicated to him the men whose names were inscribed on the temporary rolls of labor.

Especially at headquarters with the monthly trial balances he proved himself to be a wizard at figures, and he enjoyed the friendship of the manager, notwithstanding his failings, which proved sometimes rather inconvenient and embarrassing. For Mr. Kingman, besides being a gentleman and a scholar and as such a judge of things ethical, was also decidedly a judge of things spirituous. In fact, part of his short western education had disclosed to him the difference between a mild souse, an ordinary drunk, a pleasant jamboree and a glorious razzle-dazzle. Usually the head timekeeper stopped at the sophomore stage of the game, as it were, but once in a while he became a full-fledged senior, and then was apt to be graduated summa cum laude as a B.S. (Bachelor of Souses). It was at such times that he received his sheepskin at the hands of the Rector Magnificus of the Ranch, in the form of an awful dressing down, with explosive side trimmings, which sobered him considerably. Many a time he

was threatened with discharge, but when next day he turned up repentant and polite, immaculate as ever, the manager stayed his hand, for Kingman was a very valuable man.

Had he functioned in these more mechanical days, he would have been described as an orphan model, with great flexibility, an excellent mental motor, all eight cylinders hitting, but with the brake lining burned out and a rather weak rear construction—if you get my meaning. In that equine period, the verdict of the collective mind of the ranch was that Mr. Kingman was a good maverick, slightly flea-bitten, mentally short coupled, so he could turn swiftly on his haunches, and dry as Alkali Mike.

2.

Mr. Kingman had exchanged courteous greetings with Mr. Toralles for the last eight months, and a strange friendship had sprung up between the two men, so diametrically opposite to one another.

Mr. Kingman carried his liquor like a gentleman; his manners never slipped a cog once, even when he was . . . . slightly pickled. Martinez became very much of a wild Indian after the third shot of colored gasoline, such as was handed over the seventeen local bars as whiskey. The former shrank from personal battle. The latter snorted with delight if such diversion presented itself. The timekeeper was very particular about his white, starched linen. The vaquero was innocent of any such weakness. The one spoke English faultlessly. The other had con-

siderable difficulty in expressing himself, but still the men found much in common.

Both were scrupulously honest, square and loyal to their trusts. Both were gentlemen at heart and contemptuously hated a liar or a sneak. Both were courteous and of excellent manners—that is provided the first one was sober, which was twenty-nine days out of each month, and the anger of the other was not aroused. Both were ex-patriates and had learned to love the country which gave them shelter.

They were both Catholics, and two or three times they had gone together to see the Irish Priest, good Father Brown, when that worthy rode over on stated visits from Madera to serve the local parish.

At first they were but mildly interested in one another—only very mildly indeed. Then it happened that they became gloriously drunk out of the same bottle, and painted Dos Pinos a collective red. Since that hour a warm friendship, based on mutual respect and capacity admiration, had existed between them.

Van Doorne was much amused when he noticed this staunch friendship, and encouraged it, for he knew that each man was bound to be a good influence on the other. It would show Toralles the gentler side of life and thought, for Mr. Kingman was gentle and kindly; it would give the latter the so necessary example of stamina, for the vaquero had a backbone of flexible steel.

3.

It was shortly after the noon hour of an exceedingly hot day in July that Van Doorne drove his two grays through the headquarters gate and saw a cowman, mounted on a swift horse, leave the barn on a dead run and come towards him.

It was Martinez Toralles, his face black and distorted with fury. He passed Van Doorne like a whirlwind, neglecting to give the usual friendly and respectful greeting. Puzzled as the manager was, he soon had additional reason for wonder. Antonio Lopez, the hidalgo, who always bore himself as if he bestowed a favor in consenting to work as cattle major domo of the ranch, sat on his horse in the middle of the yard, his vaqueros all mounted behind him. A group of loudly-speaking and gesticulating men were gathered in front of the bookkeeper's cottage. Hailing Bill Miller, the yard foreman, Van Doorne inquired the cause of the commotion. Bill, much agitated, answered with some difficulty:

"Mr. Kingman—timekeeper—beaten up good and plenty—almost dead."

Van Doorne whistled softly and then asked:

"How did that happen?"

"About half an hour ago, that brute, Swede Olsen, whom you sent a couple of times to other foremen, when he was fired before, came in, discharged again. He filed his claim with me, but I told him the rule that a man who had been discharged three times could never be engaged again. Then he went to the timekeeper's office and began to abuse Mr. King-

man. The latter ordered him out, after handing him his bank check, but the devil jumped over the counter and must have used a pair of brass knuckles, for he almost murdered him."

Van Doorne knew the contemptible trouble-maker only too well. Shock-headed, an evil glint in his blue, pop eyes, of large physique, envious of his betters, treacherous to his equals, he bullied whenever there was an opportunity. He was always ready to think and speak evil of his fellows, and harbored an insane hatred against every man who occupied a slightly better position. Olsen had come to California a few years before, accompanied by his hard-working and respectable Swedish wife. They had two children who took after their mother and who promised to grow up into good citizens, and for their sake leniency had been shown repeatedly to the husband and father.

Van Doorne entered the little office, which looked as if a wild bull had gone through it. Books, papers, furniture, everything, was strewn about on the floor in confusion. Mr. Kingman had been taken upstairs, and when his chief came in he managed to smile weakly through his swollen features and his half-closed eyes. He was too badly hurt to raise his head from the pillow and it looked like a very serious case.

Fury took possession of the manager.

"The dirty hound!" he exclaimed, "Mr. Kingman, that blankety, blank . . . . is a low-down cur!"

Mr. Kingman's lips moved with some difficulty:

"Yes, sir, I dare say he is, sir."

The polite words which sounded so ludicrous under the circumstances, had the effect of sobering the enraged man.

"Bill, has the doctor been sent for?"

"Yes, sir, he will be here any minute, now."

"Very well. I hope he hurries, and by the way, you can give a good description of the fellow, I guess?"

"Sure I can, to the smallest detail."

"Very well, then, Bill, you may go downstairs and telephone the description to our own office. Tell the cashier to post a reward of two hundred and fifty dollars in the name of the corporation for the capture of this devil, and have them post another reward of one hundred dollars in my own name. Then telephone to all the peace officers along the line, telling them of the rewards and ask them to be on the lookout. Also phone the outlying ranches and see that the railroad sidings are watched. But before you do that, ask Mr. Lopez to come up here."

Mr. Miller hurried away and within a few moments Antonio Lopez knocked gently at the door. Van Doorne, who had seated himself at Kingman's bedside, arose, and opening the door, quickly instructed the hidalgo.

"Antonio, have your men take a quick dinner and then be off at once. Send two of them along the canal banks towards the north, and two others towards the south. Let the rest go two by two along the country roads and look under every bridge

and scan every thicket. There is a reward out of three hundred and fifty dollars for the capture of the scoundrel. If you can find him, rope him and drag him in; if he fights back, bring him in anyhow—anyway, you understand?"

"Certainly, senor Douchy. If we find him, we shall fetch him, all right. Never mind the dinner. Cook has put up some cold meat and bread. The boys have them in their saddle bags. They're ready to start now, with the exception of Toralles. He went without waiting for orders. I shall have to speak to him tomorrow . . . . if he does not find Olsen." The old hidalgo saluted and walked out.

A few minutes afterwards the beating of hoofs told the manager that the man hunt was on.

4.

That evening Van Doorne sat at the bedside of his stricken timekeeper, who, heavily bandaged by the local doctor, was now under the influence of an opiate and had at last fallen into a deep slumber. The housekeeper came in and informed the manager that he was wanted on the telephone. He arose stiffly, tired from the excitement of the day and his long vigil. As he walked over to his own office he wondered what had become of Toralles, whom nobody had seen after the eventful noon hour.

A voice on the telephone soon dispelled all doubt. It was Jake Painter, the one-armed constable of Dos Pinos, who was speaking on the wire.

"Mr. Van Doorne, we have your man in the caboose all right."

"What, Olsen? Did you catch him?"

"No, sir, not Olsen, he's in the local hospital, his ace all carved up, sliced open on both sides from heekbone to chin. I guess he is fighting for his ife now, but if blood poison doesn't set in, he'll ome out all right, though he will be marked for ife."

"I see, Jake," answered the cowman, "but whom ave you in jail?"

"Your pet, Mr. Van Doorne, that man Toralles. t seems that he lay all day along the railroad tracks, ear the shipping corrals, hiding his horse in the illow brakes. He figured that the Swede would ait in one of the tule-covered ditches and make a eap for tonight's nine o'clock freight train. Well, hat is just what he did, but instead of connecting ith a brakebeam, he was caught from behind by hat wild Indian. From what I can learn, Toralles rabbed him, but Olsen delivered a vicious blow ith his brass knuckles and knocked Toralles down. oralles drew his knife and slit the Swede's face ide open in a couple of strokes, and kicked him ll the way into town, where we found him."

"All right, Jake, I guess you and Toralles can ivide the reward. I presume you have put Olsen nder arrest at the hospital. He will have to stand ial for an attempt to commit murder, if not for ctual murder, but you better turn Martinez loose nd send him to me."

"Thanks for half the reward, Mr. Van Doorne, I ure have Olsen under arrest and a guard at his

bedside, but I can't turn Toralles loose. I have phoned to the district attorney at the county seat and he will be here early tomorrow morning with the sheriff."

Van Doorne knew that there was no use arguing with the man. Jake Painter was an old crippled soldier of the War of the Rebellion; he was stiff with rheumatism, had a "game leg" and only one arm. Just for that reason he made an excellent peace officer in the small town of Dos Pinos, for no cowboy, no matter how drunk he might become, would strike the cripple. Formerly they had had various young huskies as guardians of the peace, but one after another had been cut up, run off, or was decorating a rather early grave in the nearby cemetery.

Jake Painter was a fine native American, very much respected, and he took his job seriously. It was most important to sustain his authority, for they were far from the county seat, and generally out of reach of the sheriff's office in case of emergencies. So Van Doorne ordered his horse and rode with one of his men to the calaboose, where he spoke through the barred window with Toralles, reproving him for his rash act, which made very little impression, for Martinez knew his chief too well not to realize that the latter secretly considered that Olsen had received his just deserts. So Toralles was not at all astonished to learn that the manager would do all he could for him with the officials, and asked for a package of cigarettes, which he received through the bars.

They then rode over to the little hospital—a joint county and corporation institution—where they identified Olsen and phoned to the different ranches, calling off the search.

CHAPTER XXIII
The Old Sheriff

1.

THE sheriff and the district attorney had had a busy morning. Leaving the county seat at seven o'clock, they had reached Dos Pinos at eleven, plunged at once into the business on hand by conferring with the constable, deputy sheriff and the justice of the peace, and now they had just finished their mid-day meal at the ranch headquarters.

At the table little had been said about the cause of their visit, for this would have been strictly against the prevailing code of etiquette, but as they sat on the porch, smoking, the time for a friendly conference presented itself.

The two visitors were well worth a careful study. The county sheriff was heavily built, about sixty-five years old, broad of shoulder, deep of chest and wide of girth, with curly, iron-gray hair, and much prized gray pick and shovel whiskers, here and there slightly discolored by tobacco juice. Notwithstanding his age, he looked every inch a fighting man, with his clean-shaven, firmly-set mouth and kindly but steady blue eyes. A golden sheriff's star, the emblem of his office, donated by admiring and trusting constituents and engraved with the motto "Our

Jim," adorned his shirt front—his coat and vest were unbuttoned. In his shirt front he wore a great diamond stud, and many friends claimed that the rays of this sparkling gem were used as a headlight in the dark, when this alert guardian of the county peace was on one of his many night trips after a malefactor. The Honorable Mr. James Barfield, or as he was more familiarly and lovingly known, "Old Jim," seldom displayed his artillery, but everyone knew it was hidden somewhere about his ample person, ready for instant use. Intensely strong and virile, intensely kind and human, Jim Barfield was easily the best beloved man in the country, and had been elected and re-elected for a number of consecutive terms to the much-prized sheriff's office.

He had begun his career as a ranch rider on one of the Carpenter & Singer ranches, and had quit as division manager, being one of the very few who had made good outside the confines of the corporation. He had held his office during the time that Joaquin Murietta held sway over all the northern parts of the coast range and abutting counties, when Black Bart made the country unsafe and when Chris Evans and the Sontag brothers avenged the wrongs inflicted on them by an unscrupulous railroad land policy in the Mussel-Slough country by robbing trains and killing railroad detectives. During the years Old Jim's hair had grayed, his girth had expanded, but he had remained young and brave at heart, and had become very, very wise.

The county attorney might have easily been his son, almost his grandson for that matter. He was

a nice, clean, young American, the son of a prominent farmer in the county. He had been out of law college for only three or four years and was serving his first term as public prosecutor and legal advisor of the county officials.

He spoke to Van Doorne:

"Will you swear to a warrant against Olsen, Mr. Van Doorne? We can make it assault to commit murder now, and afterwards murder if necessary."

"I believe it will be better to let Bill Miller do that," his host answered. "He saw the man enter Mr. Kingman's office. I shall send him to you before you leave."

"Very well, sir, and who will swear to the warrant charging Toralles with the same offense?"

The sheriff sat still, very still, but a close observer could have seen the flutter of an amused smile play in his eyes.

"No one," said the manager, "so far as I know. Who could? Nobody saw him commit the act. You saw the man in jail this morning. He stood mute, of course. How could you prove him guilty?"

The young lawyer flared up, in fact, he somewhat forgot his good manners, a thing which is apt to be unhealthy in the cow country.

"That is all very well, but we know, and you know, that the Indian is guilty as sin. I understand that he is somewhat of a favorite of yours, but that is not going to save him from the consequences of his lawless conduct."

He was well started now. He assumed his best platform manners and moved majestically on his way. The sheriff sat there motionless, watching both his juniors, for the manager was only a few years older than this stripling disciple of Blackstone, but while the latter had been graduated almost immediately from college into public office, thanks to his father's influence and respected name, the other had taken his post-graduate course in the University of Hard Knocks, located anywhere on the western plains, of which the college colors are black and blue. The wise old sheriff never doubted the outcome.

When the storm of eloquence had passed, the ranch manager quietly remarked:

"That was a very nice speech, sir, very well delivered indeed. I am sure that you will go far in the profession which you have chosen. Unfortunately we have conditions here which cannot be solved by oratory. We are forty miles removed from the county seat, that is four hours stiff driving when the rain has not flooded the intervening lowlands, as it does for several months every year. Then we have no communication except by the round-about way of Tracy, one hundred and fifty miles by rail, and as the trains run here, that means a whole day. Therefore it is not easy to obtain assistance from you gentlemen in case of emergency. Of course, Mr. Barfield would come at once and form a posse-comitatos, if necessary, and I would be glad to ride with him under his orders, but hell would have been loose for several hours

before he arrived, and the damage would have been done.

"Now we have a kind of rough-and-ready way of maintaining order, and handling the situations which come up. As a result, pickpockets, dips, yeggs, porch climbers, strong-arm men, burglars and so forth are unknown. We never have to lock a window or door at night; we leave them wide open, and harm seldom comes to anyone, for they who are inclined to mischief know what to expect when caught. In our way we have dealt successfully with many difficult situations, for instance with Coxey's army.

"Now this fiend, Olsen, has beaten up several men, but he always claimed that it was in self-defense, and a few believed him—the treacherous hound! This time he could make no such claim and he beat it. He would have gotten away, too, if it had not been for the little controversy which he had last night with someone on the railroad track. I do not countenance lawlessness, but I believe that the fellow got about what he deserved. Very likely he will fully recover, and I hope that you will be easy on him, too, when he appears before the jury. He has had, you know, his first installment of punishment on account."

The sheriff then addressed the young lawyer:

"Son, I think you better adopt the view of Mr. Van Doorne; there is nothing gained in putting the county to the expense of trying Toralles. I do not think that you could prove it on him, anyhow, and

I have a sneaking suspicion that when the case is ventilated, he will have the secret sympathy of jury and spectators. You see he will admit nothing; you have only very weak circumstantial evidence, and he will act at the trial as he acted this morning, pretending that he does not understand your questions and simply repeating: 'Senor Kingman, he very, very seek, he my good amigo.'"

It was then that the young limb of the law made a fatal mistake by interrupting:

"So you, too, sheriff, will stand for this lawlessness?"

The front feet of the sheriff's chair came down with a bang on the porch floor. A slow, dull red crept over his face. He deliberately turned his old lion head towards the stripling, and then said in a low, rumbling voice:

"Youngster, I maintained order in this neck of the woods when you did not know enough to blow your own nose. I hung men in the county jail while you were still laying in a crib in the morning sun, counting your toes. I acknowledge that hanging a man always put me off my feed for a few days, and I was glad when the law was changed and that job was transferred from the county sheriff to the warden of the State penitentiaries. I had a darned good luncheon here, but some way or other, I am afraid I'm getting off my feed this time," and a cold, steely look banished the kindliness from his eyes.

The district attorney hastily beat a retreat. He not only admired his older companion very much,

n fact, owed a great deal to him, but he knew be-
ides the implicit confidence which the voters had
n the latter's judgment in all matters criminal, and
ıe realized that it would be very foolish to lock
ıorns politically with this veteran of the saddle and
he ballot box.

"Always ready to defer to your judgment, sheriff,"
ıe said, promptly, for he was a likeable youngster.
'What suggestion do you make?"

"Well," said the older man, at once mollified, "I
vould suggest that we handcuff our friend, Toralles,
ınd take him before the justice of the peace. You
uestion him there again and give him a stiff lec-
ure. He understands everything you say, even if
ıe does not act as if he does. Then let the justice
ive him another dose of talk and bind him over in
he sum of five hundred dollars to keep the peace."

"And who in the world would be fool enough to
o on that wild Indian's bond?"

Van Doorne grinned. "I shall play that fool,
f you please, for as you well said, he is one of my
ets. I know all his troubles and difficulties; at
ıeart he is a good man. Unfortunately he, like so
nany other foreigners, does not speak the language
f our modern civilization. That causes much of
he trouble and heartbreaking for us and . . . . for
hem."

2.

So it came about that Martinez was brought be-
ore his honor, the justice of the peace, and was the
entral figure in a small drama played in that dig-

nitary's stuffy, little office, which occasionally served for courtroom. As was predicted he stood mute, but watched every move made by the occupants of the room. He was bound over to keep the peace, and with a great show of authority was taken back to the lock-up by the sheriff in person, until a bondsman could be found. Old Jim spoke Mexican-Spanish like a native and had a heart to heart talk with his prisoner, winding up by saying that he would intercede in his behalf with the manager, asking the latter to go on the required bond, provided Martinez gave his word as a caballero that he would abstain from making further trouble, which Toralles did . . . . with his tongue in his cheek.

About nine o'clock the same evening the ranch manager heard again the ritz rrr ritz of roweled spurs on the porch outside, and turning around, he saw Toralles standing at the door.

"All right, Martinez, what is it?"

Toralles bowed gracefully, as became a gentleman of old Indian and Mexican lineage.

"Mr. Douchy, him sheriff speak to me, I understand. I thank you very, very much."

"Good," answered the manager briskly, "You know I am on your bond, now don't shame me."

The caballero slowly turned his hat in his hands. It was evident that he still had something on his mind.

"No. Señor Douchy, I never shame you, but my amigo very seek, yes, no? Maybe he die, and then

you give me two, three days off, I go see that Swede in Dos Pinos, yes?"

"Get out of here," roared the manager, and then he murmured to himself:

"I hope that for the Swede, too, poor Kingman will recover, for he will otherwise never reach the penitentiary alive with that Indian on his trail."

THERE WAS AN INTERIM BETWEEN THE ABANDONMENT OF ANIMAL POWER AND THE INTRODUCTION OF GASOLINE TRACTORS, WHICH WAS BRIDGED BY THE USE OF STEAM POWER, ON A MODERATE SCALE, ON THE CALIFORNIA RANCHES. THIS PICTURE SHOWS ONE OF THE PIONEER GRAIN FARMERS IN THE WEST, SEATED IN HIS END-SPRING BUGGY, READY TO SET OUT WITH A STEAM HARVESTER, IN THE YEAR 1896.

CHAPTER XXIV

The Kentucky Colonel

1.

THE complicated, sometimes interlacing, sometimes diverting interests of the far-flung properties of the corporation were held in the hollow of the President's hand. With great sagacity, he shaped the policies of the huge concern, and with as great an energy, he saw that they were carried out to the very last detail. Only a physical and mental giant could have discharged the multitudinous duties which his many tasks demanded.

As yet he did not stagger under the great load, still in growing older, he became more and more baffled by a subtile force, later known as the "awakening of public conscience," which insisted upon intruding on his well-established ways.

New ideas has entered the country, new ethics were injected in business dealings. The man-in-the-street demanded recognition and different treatment, but Mr. Carpenter stood in the midst of the different currents of thought like the Rock of Ages, strong, dominating, irreconcilable, immovable. Still from the heights which he occupied in business affairs, he could not fail to notice that the stream of life around him was changing, that new eddies ap-

peared here and there on the surface; eddies which annoyed and puzzled him.

A sardonic fate slowly began to play havoc with the mighty endeavors of the old centaur, for while he continued trying to reform the antiquated methods of those in front of him, still more progressive influences began to crowd him from behind. His step in the march of events was indeed quick enough to overtake any who blocked his masterful way before him, but not quick enough to keep out of the way of those who in ever-swelling numbers were marching behind.

The lack of a well-trained and intelligent field organization began to show itself. Promoted pick and shovel men could hardly be expected to cope with modern, industrial and social conditions.

While the princely estate of "the firm" had been acquired without burdening the real estate by mortgages; while the vast business was being carried on without paying out any interest, except for occasional overdrawn bank balances or short loans, the continued new outlays for improvements and likewise his desire to get rid of the troublesome minorities, were all conspiring to drive the corporation into the field of bonded indebtedness. If the minority stockholders would only agree to accept bonds in exchange for their stockholdings, this would eliminate the interference of the "privileged outsiders."

Banking was likewise changing. The good-natured overdrafts of open accounts were not as

PRESENT METHOD OF SEEDING ON A LARGE GRAIN FARM IN THE WEST. A CATERPILLAR IS PULLING THE SEEDERS. IT REQUIRES ONLY TWO MEN TO OPERATE SUCH AN OUTFIT.

popular with the banking fraternity as formerly and bonds secured by a trust deed on real estate would place in the treasury a readily acceptable collateral.

Other difficulties indicated what might be expected in the future. Wages were rising faster than the price of beef or mutton; laboring men began to demand shorter hours and better living accommodations; organizers of the W. W. (Workers of the World) appeared and stirred up strife amongst the men. Mr. Carpenter, convinced that in northern Italy there was a large reservoir of capable and willing labor that could be tapped, ignored the constant Americanization of the immigrants which brought a higher plane of living and higher demands.

For the present this Clemenceau of the Plains sat firmly in the saddle, confident that by sheer force, he would be able to turn the stream his way, and he partly did, for he remained until his death the acknowledged leader of land proprietors of the West.

2.

Their peer in holdings and management, he was not friendly with many of them, but was involved in trivial and serious quarrels with most of the neighbors, who mistrusted his intentions and cheerfully wished that his shadow might grow less.

They belonged to the class of men, who during the fifties, sixties, seventies, eighties and even nineties of the last century, maintained the openhanded hospitality and lavish prodigality, that had become a by-word in every part of the globe, where travelers gathered who had been fortunate enough to come

in contact with the lords of the western plains and mountains. Their dean was Lucien P. Maxwell, the owner of the famous Maxwell land grant in New Mexico, which straddled the Santa Fe trail. This frontier principality was partly obtained through Maxwell's marriage to Señorita Lux Beaubien, the daughter of Carlos Beaubien, owner of one-half of the two million acres situated within the borders of the grant, and partly from Guadalupe Miranda, the partner of Beaubien, who in due time sold his share to Maxwell. Master of a ranch the size of the State of Connecticut, he kept open house for all comers, and often from thirty to fifty guests enjoyed shelter and food under his rooftree.

The hidalgos of California, though their holdings contained "only" from twenty to sixty thousand acres, often located on the main roads, were also lavish in their hospitality and spectacular in their display. To them hospitality was a shibboleth never to be neglected, while their riding at the rodeos, their dancing at fandangos, their revelry at fiestas, always famous, sometimes became notorious.

Those were the days of Joaquin Muriatta, the outlaw murderer and bandit, and his followers; of the California Rangers, a posse of hard-riding, straight-shooting, mounted police, organized especially to subdue them. Those were the days when men carried their liquor like gentlemen, displayed diamonds in their shirt fronts and guns or bowie knives in their belts. Those were the days of care-free living, when bad women were good fellows and good women came near being angels of sacrifice and

ONE OF THE FIRST TRACTORS, HAULING A THRASHING OUTFIT, CONSISTING OF A COMBINED HARVESTER, COOK HOUSE, CREW'S SUPPLY TENT, WATER WAGON AND REPAIR WAGON, TO THE FIELD OF OPERATION.

understanding—in other words, those were the days of the romance of the West.

For years Herman Carpenter had looked aghast at this tremendous social waste and put a stop to it wherever he could. Insisting upon a more moderate and sensible viewpoint, he gave vent to withering remarks about spendthrifts.

"Pay your debts before you feast," was his just dictum, but this and other habits made him less and less welcome at the headquarters of the neighboring owners, who were men of influence, substance and position in their respective counties, and whose lack of good-will was no negligible matter.

There was a genial Spanish Basque sheep owner, who possessed a Mexican grant of some twenty thousand acres in the coast range, and who by native shrewdness had stayed clear of any business entanglements with his mighty neighbor and devoutly wished to remain so. He had cultivated an aloof understanding with the adjoining Colossus, though with others he was the soul of hospitality.

There was the Spanish physician, of pure Castilian blood, who had married the daughter of one of the old hidalgos of California, and who, as an exception to the prevailing tendency, had preserved intact the extensive family property. His thirty thousand acres straddled the main pass of a mountain range, dividing two valleys. The doctor was frankly distrustful of the acquisitive proclivities of his neighbor. He had had a few business dealings with him and had not fared very well in the trans-

action, and realizing the danger, he disliked and mistrusted Mr. Carpenter with true Latin intensity.

3.

One of the most attractive amongst them was old Colonel William Davidson, a Kentuckian by birth and breeding, whose father years before had located on the fertile lands at the conflux of two rivers. Colonel Davidson was every inch a man and every hour of his long life a courteous, considerate, courageous gentleman. He was loved by all who had the privilege of knowing him, respected by one and all who came in contact with him. To his place Mr. Carpenter occasionally went. It was quite a study to see them together, which only happened once in a very great while, as the meetings were far apart.

The Teutonic-bred land owner, stocky and sturdily limbed, walked abruptly, planting his feet squarely on the ground, glancing in every direction with alert, bold eyes, which took in everything physical, but little spiritual, making the impression of a splendid, rugged old staghound. When he rode horseback, he invariably mounted a serviceable, strong cow horse, built for comfort and work and not for show.

The Colonel, tall and lithe, broad-shouldered, with fine features, a gray, drooping mustache, curly, white hair, and kindly frank eyes, walked gracefully, just as he rode his prancing thoroughbreds.

An observer might have remarked that from the former not much eleemosynary feeling could be ex-

pected, if he had his opponent in a tight place, while the latter would not only permit his opponent to recover himself, but even might courteously apologize for having placed him in so unfortunate a position.

It must not be thought that one was all hardness, the other all gentleness. The Colonel could be very, very firm and at times magnificently stubborn; when his anger was fully aroused he was no negligible opponent. The corporation president was very often kind in a small, private way. Many a time he delighted in showing kindness to a child, giving a box of candy or a toy, and his pleasure in seeing the little one's delight was genuine. Every year he insisted that his manager should give a Christmas tree for the children of the neighborhood in the town hall of Dos Pinos, and he would take a personal, painstaking interest in the gifts to be distributed, but when one year he asked Van Doorne what he could suggest that particularly dry winter for the Christmas tree, and the latter suggested that some satisfactions of mortgages on little homesteads, or at least reduction of interest thereon, would be especially appropriate during the Christmastide, he walked off in high dudgeon, for such a course would have interfered with business, and therefore was not to be thought of.

Still there was this angle to the situation. The West was being developed by rugged empire builders, men with great vision, and Mr. Carpenter was unmistakably one of the leaders. Though ruthless in his methods, he obtained wonderful results.

Under his guiding hand villages and small towns sprang up everywhere. He brought prosperity to many. The country could not have been opened successfully by the individual effort of settlers, for it took large capital to build dams across rivers and canals for irrigation, and to make the other necessary improvements. At that time it was not as easy to float bonds for such purposes as it is now, neither did the stage of development justify as yet the confidence of bankers in such enterprises. In addition Mr. Carpenter had a passion for neatness and cleanliness and abhorred slovenly methods; he preached and practiced a gospel of economy and efficiency amongst conditions which all pointed the other way, thereby rendering a genuine service of incalculable value to the commonwealth.

Consequently Mr. Carpenter commanded as much praise as he incurred bitter criticism. For while he may at times have violated certain ethical rules, he also established order wherever he went. From an economic standpoint he stood apart from his fellowmen as a great builder of the West, as a man who acted his dreams instead of being satisfied with dreaming his actions.

While men of the type of Colonel Davidson were far more lovable and attractive, while they kept the lamps of high moral, commercial and industrial ideals burning and furnished the true leaven that that rough-and-ready society so badly needed, still it was the bulldog type of men who filled the most necessary places.

4.

Van Doorne stopped many a night under the hospitable roofs of the neighbors, when he had to see them on business. Cattle would escape and intermingle; water would break loose and do damage; coyotes had to be hunted down, and many small annoyances and grievances had to be adjusted. At such visits Mr. Carpenter's virtues or faults were not discussed, and many a happy, social hour was spent at these homes and at the headquarters of the division, when the visits were returned.

After giving five years of his life to the corporation, Van Doorne felt with no little apprehension that his chief and he were growing further apart. This was after all inevitable. The old chief represented the splendid past, with its glory, its strength and weakness; his younger retainer incarnated the future, with different methods, hopes and ideals. It was the old, old clash of ages, of passing and modern conditions.

The first serious difference occurred when a cattleman from a northern county had called at headquarters to buy thoroughbred Devon bulls. The buyer stipulated that he should have thirty days in which to take the animals away, while they were to be kept on the adjoining alfalfa field. After having them vented, the purchaser departed, but storms interfered and the thirty days passed before delivery could be completed.

Shortly afterwards the president made one of his numerous inspection trips. Driving in a light two-

horse buggy since early morning and passing the enclosure in which the vented bulls were grazing, Mr. Carpenter's sharp eye noticed the sales marks.

"Bulls sold?" he inquired.

"Yes, Mr. Carpenter."

"To whom?"

"Jim Jefferson, the northern buyer."

"When?"

"About five weeks ago."

"How much did you get?"

"One hundred and seventy-five dollars a head."

"Good price; paid already?"

"Yes."

"How long pasturage?"

"About thirty days, but he could not receive on account of storms."

"Fine. Better turn them loose on the salt grass."

At that time the slogans "the customer is always right" and "service before everything" had not yet been invented. The generally prevailing doctrine "everybody for himself and the devil take the hindmost" was still considered rather smart and was widely observed. But in the mind of the younger man, the new feelings were already stirring.

"Can't be done, Mr. Carpenter. Though part of of the bargain is that we shall keep them only one month on alfalfa, conditions beyond his control made it impossible for Jefferson to receive or for us to deliver them. That is only $2.00 a head, you

know. If we put them on the long, tough salt grass now, they will at once go back and become unsalable. Of course you know that."

The president bridled: "What I know is that these bulls are not ours any longer and that the alfalfa is. We are short of feed for our own cattle. Give orders tonight to turn them over to the salt grass."

Van Doorne turned to his elder companion:

"I am sorry, sir, but they ought to stay where they are. Under the prevailing custom, there is an implied contract that we shall take proper care of these animals until he can receive them. I got a big price for them and I hoped you would be satisfied."

The president ground his teeth, and no other words passed between them on the long drive, but it showed which way the wind was blowing. Van Doorne knew that Mr. Carpenter was slow to forgive anyone who opposed his orders. The old lion had been aroused. When would he hear the roar or expect the charge?

Still the amount involved was insignificant in comparison with the great volume of business transacted monthly at division headquarters, and the whole incident might have faded out of memory had perverse fate not made a near tragedy of an apparently trifling incident.

5.

The team had just started along the narrow road, when Mr. Carpenter suddenly said "Stop, I want to get out and look at those bulls again."

The road, raised about five feet above the surrounding country, consisted of an abandoned railroad right of way. On one side ran a ditch full of irrigation water, which formed the boundary of the small alfalfa field. On the other side extended thousands of acres of salt grass lands, traversed by numerous sloughs.

The ranch manager swung the horses over to the right as far as possible and the president alighted. In turning out, the nervous horses had had to descend the slippery embankment, and it took a few minutes to return them to the center of the road and calm them down. Turning he looked towards his chief and his heart sank within him, for the septuagenarian, heavy of body and encased in a great coat, had started to cross the top of an open irrigation box. The braces, unable to support so heavy a load, broke and Mr. Carpenter fell between them into the water. It all happened in the twinkling of an eye. The ends of the broken supports caught the elderly man in the side and there he remained, suspended, his limbs submerged to the knees in the muddy waters of the ditch. First a look of amazement appeared on his face, almost instantly displaced by a look of anger, and then as he tried to speak a look of baffled agony settled on his rugged features. The lack of a fluent outpouring of forcible language was a certain sign that the old cattleman was suffering greatly. Not a word of complaint, not a groan passed his tightly-drawn lips.

They were five miles from headquarters, the nearest place of habitation. Evening was coming on;

ithin half an hour the sun would be setting. It as impossible to tie the team, for there was no ost, fence or tree to which to tie them, and to leave iem for an instant would result in their running way, and the two men would have been stranded n the plains, to spend the night in the open with alf-wild cattle milling around them, attracted by ie unusual sight of men not on horseback or in horse-drawn vehicle.

Mr. Carpenter's face, first dark red, had become eathly white. Something had to be done. For a ioment the younger man thought of tying the lines o one of the wheels, pulling back the team autoatically, if they would endeavor to advance, but e realized that with so powerful a span and so ght a buggy, the horses would at once begin to lunge and kick, possibly landing upon the stricken an. He threw down the lines and jumped out. Ie had hardly touched the ground when the two reat dapple grays rushed off with a bound and isappeared in a cloud of dust, in which lap robes, hip, halters, seat cushions and what-not appeared intervals, sailing through the air, while the smashg of the vehicle could be heard as the hind hoofs the fleeing and kicking animals struck against . Two days later they were found full ten miles om the scene of disaster, so grievously wounded iat they had to be shot. The rig and harness were ot worth salvaging.

Van Doorne had walked over to the president, ho had closed his eyes and did not speak. He enavored to lift the heavy man from his painful

position, but the slightest movement brought a sus
pended groan. He ran to a nearby outlet box an
diverted the water from the ditch into the field
then taking a piece of driftwood, he inserted i
under the sufferer's feet, relieving his weight.

The evening shadows were closing around them
A heavy steer, slowly advancing to an open pon
in which thousands of wild ducks and geese wer
disporting themselves, was silhouetted against th
after-glow of the setting sun. Believing that i
might be a trained steer of a market hunter, stalkin
birds, he pulled his gun and fired three shots i
quick succession. He had guessed correctly.
man appeared from behind the animal swinging
two-inch bore gun.

Geese and ducks, always remaining together i
large flocks, had become a plague to the lan
owners, destroying the valuable crops. As huntin
for sport was limited, the gun club movement bein
only in its infancy, shooting with large bore gu
by the market hunters was allowed. To get withi
gunshot of the birds generally took several hour
and could only be succesfully accomplished with th
aid of a trained steer or cow, which would stand sti
or proceed in a certain direction at a whispere
command. It was slow and tedious work, but th
reward was worth while, for sixty or seventy bir
were often slaughtered in one shot.

The hunters, nomadic folk, had an unwritten la
of their own. Each staked out a territory ov
which he hunted with the consent of the superi

endent, and in which no other market hunter was o intrude. To discharge a firearm in such a hun- er's territory and spoil his kill, was therefore a oolhardy act.

The man whom Van Doorne had seen was keen o investigate. He disappeared and before long a isreputable spring wagon, drawn by a pair of agged horses, appeared from behind a clump of villows, where his camp was pitched. The man on he seat watched suspiciously, keeping his shotgun vith the heavy charge lying across his knees.

In a few words the situation was explained. For- unately the wagon carried a cross saw and axe, and efore long the light timbers which held Mr. Car- enter were cut and the corporation dignitary was aid in the bottom of the wagon. With the scattered arriage robes, they made the patient as comfortable s possible, and the old team was headed towards eadquarters. Only very slow progress could be nade, for the bumping and swaying of the poorly- quipped wagon was agony to the stricken man.

About three miles out from headquarters a line ider passed them. He was told to gallop ahead to rder the housekeeper to have everything ready for ne patient and then to go to the little neighboring own and get the doctor.

By the time the president arrived, a crude tretcher was in readiness, made of a shutter from ne of the bunk houses, with a narrow mattress nrown over it. But the patient scorned any such ssistance. He had raised himself up and with great

fortitude and leaning heavily on two men, walked to the house and to his bedroom. Drops of perspiration appeared on his forehead, but he took some coffee and asked for the doctor. He was informed that a doctor had been sent for and then he consented to being undressed. Shortly the line rider returned with a report that the doctor was twenty miles in the hills, attending a confinement case and could not be reached by the ranch telephone. A vaquero was sent to ask him to come to headquarters as soon as possible, and then under the guise of making the sufferer comfortable, Van Doorne examined his torso by lightly running his hands over it. Two ribs were broken and with each inhalation the lungs came in near contact with the ragged edges of the broken bone, causing agonizing pain. A shot of morphine was prepared from the first-aid kit, but Mr. Carpenter flew into a rage, claiming that they would kill him with such methods. As something had to be done to prevent a nervous collapse, which was sure to follow this constant pain, an order for the largest and strongest pair of corsets in stock was sent to the company's general merchandise store in town. Now the pioneer mothers of the plains, if they wore corsets at all, wore them large and stout and strong. When the contrivance arrived Van Doorne explained to his chief that he hoped the applying of the corsets and lacing them tightly would prevent the lungs from expanding and to some extent lessen the pain. This appealed to his logical mind. He arose and stood in the center of the room while he was being laced up.

In those days pajamas were almost unknown and Mr. Carpenter was arrayed in a good old-fashioned night shirt. Sleeves rolled up, grim of face, with bare arms and legs, his night shirt pulled above the knees by the laces, and encased in the heavy, steel-ribbed supports, he looked far more like a Roman gladiator than a sick cattleman.

The strain under which the young superintendent had been laboring, finally found relief in a smile, and he murmured "Moreturi salutamus."

The giant in corsets looked at him with a baleful eye. "What did you say?" he growled.

"I quoted the words of the Roman gladiators to Caesar—'We, who are about to die, salute you.'"

The pent-up wrath of Mr. Carpenter broke out, and he bellowed: "Who is going to die, and who in hell is Caesar—what have I got to do with him?"

Van Doorne dived for the door. Soon he reappeared and assisted in making the sufferer comfortable in bed. In reclining the corsets did not prove so satisfactory and the pain increased. Van Doorne watched the twisting of his features, felt his pulse which was growing weaker, and resolved on one more effort to give the patient a sedative. Stating that he thought perhaps heat, directly applied, might be a relief, he was gratified that his strong-minded patient agreed. Turning him over, he placed two layers of flannel over the sorest place and ordered some flat irons heated. Warning that a slight sting would be felt when the hot iron was

applied, he deftly slipped the hypodermic needl
under the skin and injected the fluid.

As the patient became more restful, he left fo
his office in town, to send a telegram to a San Fran
cisco hospital. Hardly had he reached his desk
when the private telephone rang. He wearily took
up the receiver and recognized his housekeeper'
voice:

"Mr. Van Doorne, how long before Mr. Carpente
will go to sleep?"

"About half an hour, I should think, but what i
the matter, is he still in pain?"

"No, he is comfortable, but we are not." Sh
went on to explain that the chief was convinced tha
the hot iron had brought relief, and he kept her
the maid, the Chinese cook, the cook's helper an
the houseman running from the far-removed kitche
to his room with freshly-heated flatirons.

Van Doorne laughed: "Never mind, Molly, ou
gladiator will soon be in the land of dreams."

At two o'clock that morning the San Francisc
Los Angeles flyer stopped at the local station an
Mr. Carpenter's personal physician, with a hospita
nurse descended from the train and were whiske
off to ranch headquarters. They brought the new
that one of Mr. Carpenter's children would soon fo
low.

The superintendent met them and conducted the
to the patient's room. En route he explained th
emergency relief which he had administered. Th
local doctor had not yet been able to put in a
appearance.

The physician made a quick but thorough investigation, then tiptoed to the door and whispered:

"You have done well—all that you could do. The heavy coat he wore must have saved him from further injury. In a day or so we shall move him to the city, but tomorrow morning when he awakens, I shall strap his side with heavy adhesive bands. Do you want to assist?"

Van Doorne looked at the follower of Aesculapius: "Doctor, as long as you think I am feebleminded, I'll take you on a poker, while you keep vigil, but tomorrow morning, oh, boy, I'm going to vamoose to the farthest end of the division, where I hear the vacas and toros calling me!"

CHAPTER XXV
The Parting of the Ways

1.

[T was obvious that the constant clash of thoughts and the prospects for advancement were not very bright for the young manager, nd soon this became increasingly evident, so he nt in his resignation. It was to take effect within ree months from date, or as much earlier as the esident might consider it convenient. The man-er served out his three months and after breaking his successor, he thought that he would be able leave in a friendly way.

He had great respect for Mr. Carpenter's tre-endous ability, for his true democracy, for his nwavering devotion to his ideals of empire build-g and though he disagreed with some of his ethods, this after all was only a difference of inion, and though reason enough for his resigna-n, in no way enough for any unpleasantness. His ng-felt wish to make an independent career in-enced him, but he greatly wished to retain the od-will of the men for whom he had worked so ng.

When he finally had said his adieus to the force his ranch headquarters, to the employees at the nk, in the warehouses and other town institutions,

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to the men in the outlying ranches and camps, and had received a grand send-off as a token of their friendship, he took the train to San Francisco and presently walked into the offices of the corporation. The officials and employees always received him with courteous smiles and pleasant words. Was he not the youngest manager on the corporation staff and at that the overseer of their most important division? Was he not often in confidential contact with the Old Man? Moreover, whenever any of the office workers were sent to the headquarters for one reason or another, he had always shown them friendly courtesy and had made the discharge of their duties easy. Besides they belonged to the much-derided class of accountants, for whom the Old Man had little use, and the younger manager was the very exponent of that class of men whom Mr. Carpenter considered valuable. At no time therefore, during the five years he had faithfully labored under the same banner with them, had his visit to the main office been anything but pleasant and mutually agreeable, creating and cementing friendships. This time, however, a chilly atmosphere greeted him.

The only exception to this general attitude of aloofness was the young gentleman who occupied the most menial position, received the most advice and the least pay—the irrepressible office boy. That freckle-faced, shock-headed youngster grinned with delight, showing unabashed the absence of several teeth. The young ranch manager was his ideal some time in the dim future he, too, would boss the

Dos Pinos division, and he would never look at the fellows in the office again. He jumped up when he saw his friend walk towards him and was rather boisterous in his welcome:

"Anything I can do for you, Mr. Van Doorne?"

"Sure, Billy, you can. Just walk into the interior shrine and see if the medium is in session, ready to receive me. I telegraphed I would call this morning, you know. And by the way, you may ask the chief if he has bought those two reserved seats for you and me for this afternoon's ball game."

Billy laughed and began to whistle, caught the stern eye of the chief clerk, looked at once virtuous and disappeared behind the door, leading into the sanctum sanctorum. He was back in a moment, opened the first of the padded doors with an official air and said:

"Mr. Carpenter is awaiting you, sir." But before swinging back the second door, he added, in a whisper:

"Look out, the band is playing," and then returning to his seat next the telephone girl, he started to make soft noises like a bawling calf, claiming that it assisted him in qualifying for a cowboy career.

Two men were seated, each at a separate desk, in the large gloomy room. The vice-president of Carpenter & Singer, Inc., courteously arose and Van Doorne greeted him and shook hands. Mr. Carpenter did not consider any courtesies in order, but motioned to a chair standing next to his great flat-top desk, and said curtly: "Sit down."

His erstwhile manager, knowing the advantage of being on his feet, shook his head:

"No, thank you, I prefer to remain standing."

Then he proceeded:

"Mr. Carpenter, I have turned over the division to my successor. He is broken in as far as I can assist him. I came here this morning not only to take leave, but to thank you from the bottom of my heart . . . ."

He got no further, for the president, whose face was red with suppressed anger, interrupted:

"Thank me! Thank me! Lots of thanks I get from you. Why do you think I taught you all these many things during the last five years? So you could pack them off for your own benefit? You . . . ."

Van Doorne came closer, looked at the irate old man and said:

"Proceed, Mr. Carpenter. You what?"

But Mr. Carpenter was, if not always a prudent man, certainly a very, very wise one; even his bitterest enemies did not deny him that quality. With most of his men he could storm and use vile language; they would answer back in kind, to which he had no objection, for in the end he always came out victorious, being a master of invectives, besides his last barbed threat was that of casting them back to the status from which they came. With this young man it was different. He still remembered him saying:

"Mr. Carpenter, kindly repeat your remarks again, but this time without vulgarity . . . . if that is possible."

So more quietly, but no less bitterly, he continued:

"You never have been my manager, nor the firm's manager, but you have been the manager for the neighbors and the men, while we paid you."

Van Doorne bowed courteously, and then:

"Mr. Carpenter, if you mean to indicate that I have always tried to be just to your neighbors, or that I have endeavored to make the lives of the hordes of men more worth living—they were mostly bewildered new immigrants brought to this country by padrones to work on our ranches at the lowest wages—then you have paid me the greatest compliment. However, I have always protected your interests and the financial results show this. And now I bid you good morning, sir."

He left the room, to return a few days later when Mr. Carpenter was away on an inspection trip, in order to confer with the vice-president and properly wind up the many strands of his former complicated administration. In this he was effectively assisted by the office manager and cashier of the company, a true Christian gentleman, whose memory is dear to all those who came in contact with him.

If he harbored the illusion that he had heard the last of Mr. Carpenter he was soon rudely awakened.

2.

Reports came slowly to Van Doorne that Mr. Carpenter was following his usual course. He

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dropped a hint here and there that Van Doorne's management had been quite unsatisfactory and unprofitable, and that he, the president, had been able to stand it no longer. While this brought only derision, for everyone knew that the able and aggressive president would not have kept any man who was incompetent or unprofitable for a day in his most unimportant division, let alone for five years in the banner position, still he was so blinded by his passion that he kept it up for some time.

The reports kept drifting back to the county seat, where Van Doorne, having finished his law studies and having been admitted to the bar, had established a law practice. He kept silent and bided his time.

At last an opportunity came. Carpenter & Singer launched an offensive against Colonel William Davidson, claiming that he had lost his riparian rights by prescription and adverse possession. It was the abundance of water which had induced the Colonel's father to settle there in early days and which had reconciled him and his family to face the many hardship adhering to pioneering in a new and wild country. The land was easily worth one hundred and fifty dollars an acre with the water rights, but not more than twenty-five dollars an acre without these appendages, and a bank and trust company held a mortgage on the property. The company would naturally become alarmed for the safety of its loan and Colonel Davidson realized only too well that this suit would greatly embarrass him, for a water litigation, always involving a vast amount of engineering, was the most expensive

kind known to western lawyers. Where large tracts of land and many miles of river frontage were involved, such a suit would ruin almost anyone, unless he were very wealthy, and banks looked with disfavor on a loan, where the owner did not manage to keep his property clear of such serious entanglements. They knew the dangerous nature of a game of matching dollars against dollars for legal expenses, when the matcher on the other side had unlimited means at his command.

Van Doorne was invited by the Colonel's senior counsel and life-long friend to join the defense as a junior. It was six years since he had resigned his position with the cattle company and the division of the water on which the plaintiff relied for his claim was based on a dam across the river, far above the boundary lines of the division which he had formerly managed, so he was glad to serve Colonel Davidson, whom he held in loving and respectful esteem.

3.

Thus it came about that on one sweltering June forenoon, when the temperature in the courtroom registered one hundred and ten degrees, and the court had just granted leave to the lawyers engaged in the great legal battle of Carpenter & Singer, Inc., plaintiff, vs. William Davidson, et al, defendants, to doff their coats and vests and appear in belted trousers and shirts (his honor promptly taking a dose of his own prescription) that the immigrant empire builder and the Kentucky Colonel met to engage in a bitter legal struggle, the outcome of

which would vitally affect the latter's whole life and future, and that of his family. Mr. Herman Carpenter had occupied the witness stand all morning under direct examination of his own counsel, a leading member of the California Bar. His answers had been given with consummate skill. It was now half past eleven and plaintiff's counsel had just sat down, announcing that he was through with the direct examination. A hush had fallen over the courtroom; the spectators were craning their necks to see what was coming. The defendant's fine, gentle face looked haggard and worried; he knew the dangerous effect of the astute testimony that had been given by his enemy. The judge on the bench looked up from his notes:

"Gentlemen, proceed with the cross examination of the witness. Which one of counsel of the defense will put the questions?"

Van Doorne arose. He felt for a moment an exaltation. His hour of retribution had come. Verily, the Lord had delivered the enemy into his hands. No dodging would now be possible. He would know when the truth was evaded and he could and would stop it. And then his vision cleared. He saw before him the octogenarian in his late and virile strength. He saw the baffled eyes of the great empire builder at bay. He saw no longer the man who had stooped to rude methods to gain his end, but he saw the emigrant from abroad who had come there as a poor boy without friends, the man of boundless energy who had never spared himself, any more than anyone else, the genius under whose

hands a whole countryside had blossomed into prosperity, and he saw the master at whose feet he had sat, drinking in the words of worldly, western wisdom, which had fallen from his lips. He realized that individuals were of no more importance to this Napoleon of the western plains than they were to his Corsican prototype and that this was a condition of mind inherent to the situation. He saw the man who had accomplished so much, not only for himself, but for the land of his adoption, while he himself had yet done so little.

He saw an old man who was swimming courageously and sturdily against an ever-rising tide of modern ideas and modern conditions; he saw that the swimmer, making a heroic struggle, was inevitably doomed to be drawn into the undertow of events, and that ere long the waves were bound to close in over him—and his great work.

4.

The Court looked puzzled: "Proceed with your cross examination, Mr. Van Doorne."

He took a firm grip on himself: "May it please the court," he spoke with some difficulty, "it is nearing the noon hour, it is exceedingly hot in the room, and with the consent of my learned brethren at the bar, I would like to make a motion to adjourn court until this afternoon."

The old judge had sensed the situation. He understood. "Motion granted, court stands adjourned until two o'clock," he announced and promptly left the bench."

Van Doorne addressed the astute, battle-scarred lawyer, who was his senior and in charge of their side of the case: "Jim, let's walk over to the Colonel, I want to speak to him."

The aged Kentuckian, dignified and lovable, arose courteously when his counsel approached him. The junior spoke:

"My nerve has failed me, Colonel Davidson, I cannot cross examine your opponent, though it is my duty to do so."

The Colonel smiled kindly: "And why not, my young friend?"

Van Doorne reddened: "Because I would be trying my own case as much as yours, and besides I once had the old chief's confidence."

Colonel Davidson bowed most graciously: "Excellent reasons, Mr. Van Doorne, excellent reasons. I respect your motives, sir. I am sure that your senior will give my opponent a very capable and thorough cross examination. Shall we now go to luncheon, gentlemen?"

ENTRANCE TO SAN QUENTIN

CHAPTER XXVI
Adios Martinez Toralles

1.

HENDRIK VAN DOORNE, Attorney and Counsellor-at-Law, was in his office, when his secretary, who had been with him for many years, and held his affectionate esteem, entered. As she quietly closed the door behind her, Van Doorne sensed an unusual situation:

"Yes, what is it?" he asked.

"There is a man in the waiting room who told the chief clerk that he wishes to speak to you, Mr. Van Doorne. He looks so peculiar that I thought I would come in personally and tell you, or rather warn you. I can send him away if you like."

"And why is he peculiar?" queried the lawyer.

"Well," she answered, "he does not look like any of our clients"—the "our" always delighted the attorney—"he looks like a bum, a jailbird, if I may so express it. I told him you had several appointments this morning, but he will not be denied. He says he comes to speak to you for a friend of his .... and yours," she added indignantly.

"How delightful," exclaimed the lawyer, laughing. "What do the French say? 'Les amis de mes amis sont mes amis.' To judge from your descrip-

tion, he may need advice more than any of our regular clients. By all means show him in."

The newcomer justified the description. The sickly pallor of prison was still upon him; the very prison atmosphere clung to his whole personality.

Van Doorne motioned him to a chair, and then said:

"I believe you have made some mistake. I do not take any criminal cases, no matter who sends me the client."

The man's eyes shifted uneasily, and he asked:

"Can I trust you?"

"I think you may, my friend, but why confide in me, as long as I cannot act as your lawyer?"

"Cut out that stuff," broke in the man harshly. "Who asked you to be my attorney? I told that fancy Jane outside who tried to put me on the blink that I had a message for you from a guy who's a good friend of yours. I come out of the pen at San Quentin yesterday. It's from Martinez Toralles."

"Toralles!" Van Doorne had not heard of the man for years, but at once there flashed before his mind the image of that fierce Mexican Indian, the man who had been the devoted attendant to his weak young son, who had taught the boy how to ride and how to throw a rope and who with infinite gentleness insisted on being his bodyguard at night, when his father was away. Many a time he had come home and found the Mexican sleeping on a mat outside the boy's room. When he was awakened, he would quietly get up, pick up his single

INSIDE ADMINISTRATION BUILDING, SAN QUENTIN

blanket and tiptoe out of the house towards the vaquero quarters, and this had often happened between two days of hard riding, but he had always refused any extra compensation.

2.

Memories came strong and fast and Van Doorne for the moment forgot his visitor. Again he lived in the past. The noises wafted in through the open window were to him not the din and clatter of the traffic of a modern city, rushing past; he heard instead the soft lowing of cows, the high pitched bawling of calves, the low grumbling of bulls, the stamping and champing at the bits of horse, the shouts of men in the saddle.

By jove, that was freedom! When young blood rushed through you and lariats swished through the air!

He saw himself once more as a curly-haired, lithe, lank, young man, swinging himself on a horse. Vanished into thin air was the middle-aged, heavy-set, gray-headed lawyer sitting in a swivel chair behind a large desk. The cowboy on horseback had taken his place. The long rows of law books, the brief cases here and there, the transcripts, files and all the paraphernalia of a busy lawyer's office were swallowed up in the shadows of the past, and slowly from the mist of far away there emerged before his vision the commanding figure of Herman Carpenter, the Grand Old Man of the Plains—solid, stern, forbidding.

Gradually the picture softened. The Colossus, who had stood out in the wild stream of the early pioneer life of the West had gone to his final reward at the ripe old age of 90 years, but not before the whirligig of changing conditions and the ever-rising tide of progress had begun to undermine the foundations of the great structure which he had erected. Man .... and what a man .... had proposed; God had disposed.

The face of the lawyer involuntarily saddened. Once more he realized, as he had so often done before in the course of his practice, that "the best-layed plans of mice and men go oft awry."

Most of the men with whom Van Doorne had worked or who had worked under his orders had been scattered far and wide or had died, for their mode of life was not conducive to old age. Only occasionally one of the old hands came to his office for a smoke, a friendly chat with "the old chief," or to give a hint that a small temporary loan would be acceptable, the repayment of which would have scandalized both parties. Sometimes the lawyer did not go to his club for luncheon, but took a derelict of the past for a bite at the nearest restaurant. It was a relief to hear again the plain talk of the camp, of the stern realities of life.

So many changes had come. The State had settled up; large landed properties were continually cut up and divided into small homesteads; the wild lands became smaller and smaller in area; the farmer had taken the place of the cattleman, and he in turn felt himself being shouldered out of the way

PRISONERS AT SAN QUENTIN, LINED UP IN YARD FOR LUNCH

by more of the progressive orchardists and vinyardists.

Cattlemen and their retainers were diminishing in numbers. It seemed as if the old Napoleon of the range on his departure from the sun-baked plains of the West to the Elysian Fields had taken with him as a guard of honor many of his former associates and companions in arms.

The flood of social advancement kept rising, rising as relentlessly as a freshet in the spring. Yes, California and the old West were on a glorious march to a glorious future! The juggernaut of progress passed over and crushed everyone in its way. It was as inevitable as the rising and setting of the sun.

3.

The telephone on the desk rang. With a start Van Doorne realized that he was in his office, supposed to be a hard-headed barrister and not a dreaming cowboy. He looked rather apologetically at the man opposite, who was watching with a knowing, crooked smile. He, too, had had wild dreams of freedom during his long days at the jute looms in San Quentin and during the still longer nights in his lonely cell. He, too, knew how it felt when the wings of imagination beat themselves to pieces against the doors of fate.

"Have a cigar." The lawyer held the box towards the ex-convict. "I certainly consider Martinez my friend, although I had entirely lost track of him. You say he is in San Quentin?"

"For life," answered the man, shortly.

"What brought him there?"

"Woman."

"Very likely," continued the questioner, "but how?"

"Well, shortly after you left, Toralles settled down, he says. He married a half-breed and they had a little son he was crazy about. One night he was full of bad liquor, got into a fight over the Jane—no one knows much what happened—but someone was bad cut up and died. The county authorities prosecuted Toralles and he was sent up for life."

"I see," said the lawyer, "and what is his message for me?"

"Before he was sent up, he bought a little property, town lot and a shack. Says he wanted to be a 'regular citizen' and settle down. He wants you to come to the prison and talk things over with him. He says he knows you'll come. Well, that's all," and the man arose.

The lawyer went with him to the door:

"Thank you, my friend, for coming. I certainly shall go to the prison within a few days," and he shook hands with the man. The latter felt a piece of paper slip in his hand. True to his prison-bred instinct, he acted as if he had not noticed it, and only opened his hand when alone in the corridor. Then he whistled slowly, muttering under his breath:

SAN QUENTIN BAND

"Well, I'll be damned if that greaser wasn't right." He threw back his shoulders and with a new assertive manner, indicative of a returning confidence, he rang for the elevator.

4.

Three days later Van Doorne dined with his old crony, the warden of the great penitentiary. His home was situated on a bluff dominating the grim, fortress-like and forbidding looking buildings of the prison proper. The dinner was charming, excellently cooked by a life-termer, served by two gentlemanly burglars, while a string orchestra, made up of a sentimental safecracker, a musical porch climber, a vocal pickpocket and several lesser dignitaries, played for the occasion in an adjoining room.

After dinner the warden inquired if his friend desired to see the prisoner, as the captain of the yard had already received instructions. Obtaining an affirmative answer, he rang for the guard, who took Van Doorne into the prison courtyard through the double-barred main gate, opened by two trusties and watched by an armed guard. It was a brilliant moonlight night, and the different buildings stood out sharply in the white light of the great arcs overhead. The guard reported to the captain that the visitor from the warden's office had arrived and the prisoner was sent for. Van Doorne elected to wait outside with the guard, who became quite talkative.

"Waiting for Toralles, sir?"

Van Doorne nodded.

"Well, he's quite a character. Generally obedient and docile enough, but sometimes he fights like a wild Indian. It took six of us to put him in a dungeon when he had to be disciplined with solitary confinement. Afterwards though it proved that he was not the guilty party."

"I imagine it would take six men under those conditions," remarked the visitor dryly. "How is he occupied now?"

"Well, he's working at the new concrete cell house, packing sacks of cement up to the fourth tier. He's strong as a bull, you know."

"I ought to know," said the lawyer, "he is a very old friend of mine."

"I thought so," replied the guard. "For the last three weeks he has been continuously talking about his old boss, a Mr. Douchy. So that's you. How did you find out he wanted to see you?" he asked cannily.

"Oh, my friend, that was easy. Have you ever heard about Dr. Cook's arctic explorations? Well, read up on them," and he turned away from the self-appointed, mystified sleuth, for he saw his old vaquero coming towards him.

Martinez still walked erect, in the mincing way of the rider, showing even in ugly-striped prison clothing and notwithstanding advancing years, his splendid physique. Off came his cap, and Van Doorne noticed with a start that his blue-black hair was divided by a snow-white streak in the center. They shook hands and then conversed in low tones.

NEW EAST CELL BLOCK

Whatever passed between them will never be known, but when the lawyer took his leave, he shook hands once more with him, saying:

"All right, old man, I have not forgotten what you did for my son when he was a little shaver. Send your boy to me."

5.

Two days afterwards, the faithful secretary, herself a descendant of the proud old Spanish families, who held sway over California before the gringos came, entered her employer's office and was startled at his white face. He held a letter in his hand, which he slowly stretched out to her. It was from the warden of the prison and read:

"Dear Sir:

"I am sorry to have to inform you that prisoner No. 18210 (Martinez Toralles) in whom you are interested, committed suicide by throwing himself head foremost from the fourth story of the new cell building, which is under construction. He was found with a broken neck and crushed skull on the pavement below. Death was instantaneous. The reason for his action is unknown. The last words he spoke before he jumped were to a guard, who stood nearby. 'Tell Mr. Douchy, he'll understand.' I infer that he meant you.

Yours respectfully,

JAMES K. BARSON,
Warden."

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